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PREFACE

THE scope of history is vast, and the time most people can find for studying the subject is so limited that selection, on one principle or another, is forced alike upon students and upon general readers. There are many possible principles of selection, and all can plead justification of one sort or another. The idea of this book is to focus attention on a succession of critical epochs, in each of which a tangle of problems, important not only for the generation that faced or shirked them, but for all subsequent generations, presented itself for solution to a statesman of eminent genius. The method is not strictly biographical, for in each case the emphasis is more on the statesmanship than on the statesman. None the less the biographical element may add dramatic and human interest to the study.

It cannot be claimed that in these nine studies a continuous outline of history is presented. None the less, if the reader were to find in them nine essays detached from their context, which might as well have been arranged in alphabetical as in chronological order, the writer will have failed to achieve his purpose. " The roots of the present lie deep in the past," and the problems of one period are the corollaries of the problems of the period before. Even when the epochs chosen lie some centuries apart, and the scene is changed from one country to another, links may be sought and found. I have confined my choice to the main currents of " Western" history, and selected as my subjects the men who seemed best to typify and summarise the main elements in that history.

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PREFACE

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Pericles represents the central achievement in the statesmanship of Classical Greece. Julius Caesar and Augustus bridge the period in which a stable Roman Empire emerged from the chaos that naturally arose when a City State, akin in character to those of Greece, attempted to perform functions for which such a state was wholly unsuited. Charlemagne presents a conscious revival and imitation of the empire of Julius and Augustus, under circumstances transformed by Barbarism and by Christianity. In Innocent III. we have the climax of yet another " Roman Empire," the culmination of an effort to combine the traditions of Julius Caesar and Jesus Christ under a single political system. This perished in the rise of nationalism, followed by the Renaissance and the Reformation, and in Richelieu (who was, somewhat oddly, a Cardinal), the new " Patriotism " finds one of its most thorough exponents ; and, if Richelieu links backward to the fall of Rome and the Reformation, he links forward to the French Revolution and Napoleon. Washington and Hamilton give us the most momentous of all the consequences of the discovery of the New World, the foundation of the United States, an event which is also the chief crisis in the history of the British Empire. Bismarck and Gladstone, and the nations they guided, typify the strangely mingled contributions of the French Revolution to the nineteenth century—militarism and liberalism.

It would be easy, no doubt, to make and to defend a different set of choices. I have passed over Abraham Lincoln, for example, though his is, in my opinion at least, a nobler if not a greater name than any on my list. None the less, the fact remains that Abraham Lincoln was killed before he had an opportunity of grappling with the great problems of North and South, Black and White, which victory in war had not solved but only given him the power to try to solve. Thus, though his character remains one of the great achievements of the human race, his career as statesman was tragically incomplete. Again, I have, with

one exception, avoided English statesmen, because it is not in English History that the gaps in our common knowledge seem at present most to need filling. The number of quite first rate and easily accessible studies of the Cromwell period, for example, is remarkable. It is only when we approach what has been called " the dense obscurity of the recent past," that it becomes hard for the ordinary reader to feel his way in the history of his own country. So I have ventured on the delineation of an " Eminent Victorian."

I have sometimes asked myself whether this book will be classed as a book or a school-book. Professor Pollard defines a school-book as " a rehash of old facts flavoured only with an original spice of error," and I cannot claim that my book is any more than this. But I think that the existence of this hard and fast distinction between the book and the school-book is one of the faults of our educational methods. One at least of the objects of teaching history should be to foster the taste for reading history as written by the great historians. My aim, therefore, has been to write a book which, while it has the brevity and simplicity necessary for school purposes, has also some of the qualities that distinguish books from school-books. Even though I may have failed to achieve my purpose, I maintain that the purpose was a good one.

Finally, I have placed at the end of the book a short annotated bibliography. To the professed student it will appear despicably inadequate, but it is not intended for him. It may perhaps be of use to the inexperienced reader, who desires to look further into the subjects I have briefly set before him, and does not know what the obvious books are.

A few remarks may be added on the earlier portraits in this book. That of Pericles is the well-known bust by Cresilas, a contemporary sculptor : it is said to be the earliest Greek portrait bust which has been with certainty identified, and to confirm the statement of the ancient critics that Cresilas added nobility to men of noble type. The bust

of Julius Caesar is in the Louvre : it is an impressive work, and seemed better worth reproduction than the very familiar bust in the British Museum. Dürer's picture of Charlemagne can, of course, make no claims as a likeness of its subject, who died seven centuries before it was painted. Of Innocent III., as of Charles, there appears to be no authentic portrait. The best that can be said for the medallion here reproduced is that, though of late date, it resembles the sixteenth-century portrait in Baronius' *Annales Ecclesiastici*, and that both were presumably copied from a contemporary mosaic portrait in the Palazzo Conti at Rome, which was still in existence at the time when Baronius' work was published.

D. C. SOMERVELL.

TONBRIDGE,
July, 1923.

CONTENTS

I. Pericles (491-429 B.C.). PAGE

(i) Athens - - - - - - - 1
(ii) Athenian Democracy - - - - - 7
(iii) The Athenian Empire - - - - 12
(iv) The Coming of the Peloponnesian War - 17
(v) The End - - - - - - - - 24

II. Julius Caesar (102-44 B.C.).

(i) Rome before the Revolutions - - - 29
(ii) The First Two Generations of Revolution - 33
(iii) Caesar as a Party Politician - - - 39
(iv) Spain and Gaul - - - - - - 50
(v) The Far Side of the Rubicon - - - 60
(vi) The heirs of Caesar : Antony and Augustus 70

III. Charles the Great (742-814).

(i) The Survival of the Roman Empire - - 79
(ii) The Frankish Empire - - - - - 86
(iii) The Imperial Coronation and its remoter consequences - - - - - 95

IV. Innocent III. (1160-1216).

(i) The Great Age of the Papacy. - - - 103
(ii) The Predecessors of Innocent III. - - 108
(iii) Church and State during the Pontificate of Innocent III. - - - - - 113
(iv) The Fourth Crusade - - - - - 125
(v) The Albigensian Heresy - - - - 131
(vi) The Collapse of the Papal Ideal - - - 135

V. Richelieu (1585-1642). PAGE

(i) The New Nationalism and the Strife of Creeds - - - - - - - - 139
(ii) The Creation of the Bourbon Despotism - 147
(iii) France and the Thirty Years War - - 156
(iv) Louis XIV. - - - - - - - 166

VI. Washington (1732-1799) and Hamilton (1757-1804).

(i) The American Colonies and the Mother Country - - - - - - - 173
(ii) The Stamp Act and the Declaration of Independence - - - - - - - 181
(iii) Washington and the War of Independence - 186
(iv) Anarchy and Union - - - - - - 194
(v) The Presidency of Washington - - - 204
(vi) Permanence of the Work of Washington and Hamilton - - - - - - 214

VII. Napoleon (1769-1821).

(i) The French Revolution - - - - 219
(ii) Vendémiaire to Brumaire - - - - 232
(iii) The Consulate - - - - - - 244
(iv) Napoleon beyond Europe - - - - 256
(v) Megalomania - - - - - - 259

VIII. Bismarck (1815-1898).

(i) Germany and Prussia down to 1815 - - 268
(ii) The German Revolution in 1848 - - - 282
(iii) Bismarck at Frankfort and St. Petersburg - 292
(iv) The Exclusion of Austria from Germany - 300
(v) The Franco-German War - - - 314
(vi) The German Empire under Bismarck - - 321
(vii) " Dropping the Pilot " : Conclusion - - 333
Note on the Ems Telegram - - - 340

IX. GLADSTONE (1809-1898). PAGE

(i) Gladstone and Peel - - - - - 343
(ii) The Peelites and Palmerston - - - 353
(iii) Gladstone and Disraeli - - - - 363
(iv) The Early Eighties - - - - - 377
(v) Home Rule - - - - - - 398

APPENDIX - - - - - - - - - - 411

INDEX - - - - - - - - - - - 417

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

PERICLES, from a bust in the British Museum - - - 10

JULIUS CAESAR, from a bust in the Louvre (Photo. Mansell) 50

CHARLEMAGNE, from an engraving by J. Kirchner after Albrecht Durer - - - - - - - - 80

INNOCENT III., from Friedrich Harter's *Geschichte Papst Innocenz des Dritten*, being presumably copied from the Mosaic Portrait originally in the Palazzo Conti, Rome - - - - - - - - - - 114

RICHELIEU, from an engraving by B. Picart after Campaigne - - - - - - - - - - 148

GEORGE WASHINGTON, from an engraving by W. Nutter, after C. G. Stuart - - - - - - - - 188

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, from the portrait by John Trumbull in the City Hall, New York - - - - 198

NAPOLEON, from an engraving by G. Fiesinger after Jean Guérin - - - - - - - - 234

BISMARCK, from a Portrait by F. von Lenbach - - 284

GLADSTONE, from a Photograph (London Stereoscopic Co.) 344

MAPS.

Greece at the Beginning of the Peloponnesian War, 431 B.C. 26

The Roman Empire at the time of Caesar's death, 44 B.C. 76

FACING PAGE

The Empire of Charlemagne, and the Partition of Verdun, 843 A.D. - - - - - - - - - - - 100

Europe during the Pontificate of Innocent III., 1198-1216 136

French Territorial Gains in the Seventeenth Century - 166

The Growth of the United States of America, 1789-1865 - 216

Central Europe in 1812 A.D. - - - - - - - 266

Brandenburg under (1) the first Hohenzollern, 1415-1440 A.D., and (2) the Great Elector, 1640-1688, (3) Prussia under Frederick the Great, 1740-1786 - - - 276

Germany, 1866-1871 - - - - - - - - 318

I

PERICLES (491-429 B.C.)

(i) ATHENS

It is fitting that a series of studies in statesmanship, studies that is to say, of the ways in which great rulers in various ages have faced the problems of government, should begin with an Athenian statesman. For the Athenians were the first people to envisage the problems of politics along the same general lines as we envisage them to-day. Our fundamental notions of politics can be traced back to an Athenian ancestry, as surely as fundamental religious ideas can be traced back to a Hebrew ancestry. No doubt the differences between ourselves and our ancestors are profound and, at first, bewildering. There is much in the political thought of Plato, as also in the religious thought of Isaiah, that we find strange and incredible. None the less, the points of contact and similarity between their thought and our own are really more important than the differences. Very often their thoughts are really our own thoughts, even though the language in which they have expressed their thoughts disguises this real identity.

The Athenians, it must be admitted, proved more successful in political speculation than in political action, and Plato, the political philosopher, bears a greater name than any Athenian statesman. None the less, political theory is generally the offspring of political practice, and Plato could

never have written his *Republic* [1] if his mind had not been enriched and inspired by the contemplation of the extraordinary performances of the practical men who had ruled his city during the hundred years before he wrote his book. Among those practical men Pericles stands pre-eminent. He was the most powerful statesman in Athens throughout the thirty years which were the proudest in her history, the thirty years that lie between the triumphant struggle with Persia and the beginning of the great civil war, the Peloponnesian War, in which Athens and her maritime empire were defeated by a coalition of cities of the mainland of Greece, led by Sparta and Corinth. He was born in 491, the year before the battle of Marathon, and died in 429, in the third year of the Peloponnesian War.

Pericles does not appear upon the stage of history until the great age of the Persian Wars is over, but it is impossible to understand him and his period unless we keep the memory of the Persian Wars continually in our minds. For Pericles and his generation were inspired to perform feats at which civilised man has never since ceased to marvel, and the source of their inspiration was national pride. Athens was the city that had done the unique, the incredible thing; she had beaten the Great King of Persia. Nothing henceforth could be impossible for such a city. All the tributes of art, all the spoils of empire, were her's by right. To understand the Athens of Pericles we must try to enter into the Athenian memory.

The Persian Empire had been founded in Mesopotamia by Cyrus in 537 B.C. on the ruins of the Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar. It was Cyrus who released the Israelites from their captivity, and sent those of them who wished to go, back to their own land. Then the Persian armies spread westwards, and Croesus, King of Lydia, in western

[1] Plato was born about 430 B.C., *i.e.* about the time of the death of Pericles. The date of the composition of the *Republic* is very uncertain; possibly about 370 B.C.

Asia Minor, who had seemed to the little Greek cities the very last word in wealth and magnificence, was conquered and deposed. The fall of Croesus was to these Greeks a shattering event, and became their favourite illustration of their sombre proverb, " Call no man happy till he is dead." Then came the turn of the Greek cities of Asia Minor, Miletus and Ephesus and the rest, which, previous to the year 500, had been far more productive of science and poetry and wealth than the cities of the mainland of Greece. These were all enslaved, and in the year 490 the Persians undertook their first invasion of European Greece. After subduing and destroying various island cities of the Aegean on their way, they landed at Marathon, some twenty miles from Athens on the opposite side of the peninsula of Attica. Here they were met by less than ten thousand Athenians, and utterly defeated. They re-embarked their shattered forces, sailed round the Cape of Sunium, and had a look at the city of their conquerors ; then they turned and went home.

Ten years later (480 B.C.) there came a second and much more formidable invasion. Xerxes and his vast host—Greek imagination in a later day swelled its numbers up to five millions—came lumbering round by the land route through Macedonia, accompanied by their fleet. Bridges were built to cross the Hellespont to aid the progress of the army ; a canal was cut through the peninsula of Mount Athos to save the fleet from rounding that stormy cape. The bridges, indeed, collapsed, but the canal was undoubtedly cut, though, centuries later, the Romans refused to believe it.

The Greek states organised combined action for defence at a conference on the Isthmus of Corinth, but most of the states north and west of Athens refused to play the heroic part, and " Medized," giving the Persians free passage through their territories. A little Spartan force was sent under King Leonidas to hold the Pass of Thermopylae, a hundred miles north-west of Athens ; but a traitor among the " Medizing " Greeks who lived in that neighbourhood

showed the Persians a way through the mountains to the Spartan rear, and Leonidas and his men were destroyed. Nothing was now left except cowering neutrals between the Persian host and Athens. But since the battle of Marathon the Athenians had discovered a silver mine in their territory, and with the profits of the mine their statesman, Themistocles, had persuaded them to build a fleet. To this fleet, the " wooden wall " foretold, some said, by an oracle, they now decided to entrust their fortunes. Athens was left to destruction ; the men manned the fleet, and the women and children were transported to the island of Salamis near by. Among the children was Pericles ; and his favourite dog, we are told, swam after the boat all the way to the island of Salamis, and died of heart-failure when it came to land. The fleets met near Salamis, and once again the enemy was utterly defeated. In the next year the army of the invaders was defeated by the Spartans and their allies at Plataea, in Boeotia, just outside the territory of Attica, and thereafter the Persians left the mainland of Greece, never to return.

This sufficed for the Spartans, but Athens was already taking the offensive. A few days after Plataea, an Athenian naval victory at Cape Mycale, near Ephesus, began the emancipation of the Greeks of Asia Minor. Then they captured the fortress of Sestos on the Hellespont, the Gibraltar of the Athenian Empire that was now to be founded. The Empire began as a voluntary confederacy uniting Athens, the Liberator city, with the Greek islands and cities of Asia Minor that she was preparing to liberate from and defend against, the Persians. Athens supplied the fleet and consequently controlled foreign military policy. A few of the allies supplied small naval contingents, but the great majority contributed in money to a common treasury established in the sacred island of Delos. But the tribute was collected by Athenian officials, and the control exercised by the Council of the Confederates, on which each ally had a single vote, was never more than nominal. The final

triumph of the warfare of the Confederacy was the double battle, on land and sea, at the mouth of the river Eurymedon on the south coast of Asia Minor in 468. Here the Athenian Cimon brought the Persian peril to an end.

The thirty-seven years of Athenian history that lie between the battles of the Eurymedon and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War contain the record of the most astonishing output of human genius that history can show. Athens had already been rebuilt, so far as the necessities of life were concerned, during the years that followed the battle of Salamis. The city had also been fortified, and, much to the disgust of the Spartans, connected by the Long Walls with her port, the Piraeus. But the Athenians already understood that the state should provide not only " life " but " a good life " for its citizens, and in this spirit they began to adorn their city with temples and public buildings and works of sculpture, which, even in their present ruined state, are among the wonders of the world. During these thirty-seven years the three great composers of tragedy, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, were all of them producing plays for the annual dramatic festivals in honour of the god Dionysus. Aristophanes, the writer of comedies, was also growing to manhood. Socrates, the patron saint of schoolmasters, was beginning his strange career as an asker of awkward questions which forced men to think for themselves and discover their own ignorance, and his disciple, Plato, was born just as this period came to its close. Herodotus also, though not a native of Athens, came thither to publish his history of the Persian Wars, and was awarded a handsome prize for it from the Athenian treasury ; and another historian, greater though less amusing, was also growing up to manhood, Thucydides, whose history of the Peloponnesian War is the tragic epitaph of our period. But the central figure of the brilliant group, at least in the opinion of Thucydides himself, was the statesman, Pericles, who presided over all. For in the palmy days of

Athens every citizen, however great an artist or poet he might be, was first and foremost a patriot. His art was dedicated to the glory of his city, and the city-state was the expression of the whole life of society, and not merely of what we call politics to-day. All Athens was the temple of the goddess Athene, and the sculptors and the architects, the tragedians and the historians, were all of them her servants.

One must picture Athens as the capital of Attica, a hilly district about the size of one of the smaller English counties. In the time of Pericles the population of Attica may have reached nearly half a million. The recent growth had been rapid, owing to the influx of resident foreigners, Greeks for the most part, from other cities. These were generally traders, and perhaps the majority of them lived not in Athens but at the Piraeus. This alien population, together with the slave population, increased more rapidly than the citizen body, and aliens and slaves together probably outnumbered the citizens before the death of Pericles. Of the slaves, three-quarters lived with their masters as fellow-workers, and were so well treated that strangers to Athens used to complain that it was impossible to tell whether one was speaking to a citizen or a slave. The remainder worked the silver mines at Laureion, and were no doubt treated as hardly as slaves employed on such labour always are. Of the citizens, some dwelt in the city and some in the villages of Attica, and the greater part were engaged in agriculture, but all were Athenians and not merely "Atticans." The city was the market, and the market-place was also the meeting-place of the Assembly that controlled the rulers of Athens.

The city had grown up round a flat-topped but very precipitous little hill, the Acropolis, an easily defended place of refuge, four miles from the coast; for the early Greeks did not build their cities on the sea-shore, from fear of pirates. After the fleet had been built, and Athens become a great naval and commercial power, a second city grew up rapidly around the docks of the Piraeus, and was connected with

Athens by the famous Long Walls. Themistocles, the great radical imperialist who built the fleet, wanted to shift the capital to the Piraeus after the Persians had destroyed the old city, but happily religion and conservatism were too strong for him. The Piraeus does not figure in Greek art and poetry, but it was the gateway of commerce, and probably exercised an increasing influence in politics. Very likely it may have been true that what the Piraeus thought to-day, Athens would think to-morrow.

(ii) ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY

The statesmanship of Pericles marks the climax of the greatness of Athens, and to understand it we must glance at the work of some of his predecessors. The democratic system, in particular, was the creation of others, and Pericles had merely to add the finishing touches and to preside.

The founder of Athenian democracy was the law-giver Solon, whose work was done about 590 B.C., a hundred years before Marathon. Solon found that the introduction of money and money-lending had led to the virtual enslavement of the poor as debtors to the rich. His remedy was simple and drastic. He cancelled at one stroke the entire debt of the agricultural population by proclaiming what went down to history, in *Pilgrim's Progress* language, as a " Shaking Off of Burdens " (*Seisachtheia*)[1]. Henceforth Attica was a land of peasants owning the fields they tilled. So much for economic freedom, without which democracy must always be something of a sham. Two other great reforms of Solon concerned legal procedure. He first gave every citizen the right of setting on foot a criminal prosecution. " That city," he said, " is the best policed where all the citizens, whether they have suffered injury or not, equally pursue and punish injustice." Secondly, he ordained that in certain cases when

[1] I am indebted to Mr. Zimmern's *The Greek Commonwealth* for this very happy allusion to Bunyan.

the law was in dispute (what cases we do not know), the matter should be referred to a jury of the whole body of citizens. This great popular jury, the Heliaea, always remained a leading feature of Athenian democracy. Lastly, in what we should call the political sphere, he ordained that every magistrate, when he had completed his year of office, should give an account of his stewardship before the assembly of the whole body of citizens. And the magistrates themselves, the nine Archons or Rulers, were to be chosen annually by lot from a body of forty elected candidates. This introduction of an element of pure chance into the choice of magistrates must seem to us absurd ; but it must be remembered, first, that choice by lottery was supposed to be choice by divine guidance, and secondly, that in such a primitive community as the Athens of Solon's day, little or no expert knowledge was required of a ruler. Common sense and common honesty would be assured by the fact that the candidate had been elected a member of the " Forty." By the time of Pericles, the Archons, who were by that time chosen by lot from the whole body of the citizens, had become unimportant officials, and the real direction of affairs had been taken over by ten annually elected " Generals."

After Solon's day, Athens passed for fifty years (560-510), as did most other Greek cities at about that time, under the rule of " Tyrants," Pisistratus and his sons Hippias and Hipparchus. But Pisistratus, like Caesar and Napoleon, was a champion of democracy, the leader of " the Mountain," the party of the poor upland peasants. He carried on and completed the economic work of Solon, by lending the peasants money to establish the prosperity of their farms. For the cultivation of the slow-growing olive, an important element in Athenian agriculture, is impossible without some initial capital.

After the fall of the tyranny, Cleisthenes, between 510 and 500 B.C. completed the work of Solon. Hitherto the workings of democracy had been hampered by an ancient social

aristocracy of clans based on family connection from which the poorer classes were excluded. Cleisthenes, by a series of ingenious measures, broke down and abolished the old clan system. It was the Athens of Cleisthenes' organisation that defeated the Persians.

Pericles was a great-nephew of Cleisthenes, and came of a family that had been distinguished for many generations, the Alcmaeonidae. His first important political action was when, in 463, he supported one Ephialtes in securing the destruction of the powers of the Council of the Areopagus. We know remarkably little about this Council, except that its members were life members, and that it exercised a general supervision over the government and constitution. No doubt it was the last remaining fortress of aristocracy, and as such it was stormed and conquered. Nothing was left to it but jurisdiction in cases of homicide, and certain religious duties. Its other powers were transferred to the Council of Five Hundred (described below) which had been instituted by Cleisthenes.

We must now briefly describe how the democratic system worked at Athens in the time of Pericles. Such a description will fall under four headings : The Council of Five Hundred, the Assembly of the citizens, the Law Courts, and the position of the Magistrates and of Pericles himself.

The members of the Council of Five Hundred were chosen by lot from the body of the citizens, but, before admission, each had to undergo a public scrutiny concerning his life and character, and, at the end of the Councillor's year of membership, there was another examination touching his discharge of his duties. The meetings of the Council were held in public, in the open air. Pericles introduced payment of the members. Its chief duties were to prepare " Bills " (as we should say) for submission to the Assembly, and if, by the approval of the Assembly, these Bills became law, to supervise their administration. The ordinary work of the Council was discharged by committees of Fifty, each

committee being responsible for the work of the Council during a tenth part of the year.

The Assembly of the whole body of citizens, or as many as could attend—here again Pericles instituted payment for those who attended each meeting—was the supreme authority in the state. In normal times it met, in the open air of course, ten times a year, but special Assemblies were summoned in emergencies. The Assembly sanctioned or rejected the " Bills " of the Council, controlled policy and declared war ; but it could not deal with any business other than what the Council laid before it. The Council and the Assembly, in fact, stood to one another in the same sort of relation (in spite of many differences in detail) as the modern English Cabinet and the House of Commons.

The Law Courts, the Heliaea, on the other hand, discharged a variety of functions and possessed a variety of powers, which makes them quite unlike any one institution of the modern state. Their membership was the whole body of citizens, divided into committees of jurymen. These committees not only tried cases at law between individuals, like a modern law court, but also decided what we should consider strictly political issues. If a general failed in the expedition on which he had been sent, if a magistrate was accused of mismanagement or treason, if any allied or subject city complained of the tribute it had to pay—all alike went before a committee of jurymen. Further, these committees exercised a kind of censorship over the work of the Assembly. When any one in the Assembly made a proposal which involved an alteration of the existing law, he could be impeached before a jury, and only if the impeachment failed was the proposed alteration of the law allowed to pass. It was before these juries that, a hundred years after the time of Pericles, Demosthenes delivered most of his great political speeches.

Far the most important executive officers or magistrates, in the Periclean period, were the ten " Generals." They were elected by the whole body of citizens by show of hands,

and held office for a year, though they might be impeached, deposed, and put to death during their year of service. Thus a successful " General " needed to be a statesman and an orator as well as a military man. A successful General would be elected again and again, and would, by experience and prestige, secure authority over his colleagues. Pericles was elected General for fifteen years in succession, from 445 to 430 B.C., and was thus the ruler of Athens.

It will be asked, how did this astonishing system work ? The answer is implied in the text, " By their fruits ye shall know them." How it worked under Pericles we shall see. After his death it lasted another hundred years, but it never worked so well again. The electorate began to prefer men of words to men of deeds and character. The system was condemned as a form of government by the greatest of Athenian thinkers, Plato, and when the Macedonian conqueror came to snuff out the little Greek commonwealths, the Athenians had become a nation of debaters, and had lost the arts of Marathon and Salamis.

Athens was a democracy of the extremest type known to the Ancient World. In one way, it was more democratic in its methods than any modern nation can be, for the bulk of the citizens took an active part in political life. But in other respects it was, judged by modern standards, a mere oligarchy. For citizenship was a privilege unobtainable except by the chance of birth, and as Athens grew and accumulated in her midst a great population of mercantile foreigners, the exclusiveness of the citizen body became more conspicuous. In the time of Pericles the population of Attica would consist of four classes: the town-dwelling citizens, the country-dwelling citizens, the resident aliens, and the slaves. Nominally the first two, actually only the first, of these controlled the politics of Athens ; and the first two classes together must have contributed less than half the adult male population. The principle of " one man one vote " cannot apply to a slave-owning community which refuses to naturalise its aliens.

(iii) THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

The Athenian Empire began as a Confederacy of Greek States organised, after the great victories on the mainland of Greece, for the further prosecution of the war with Persia. The lesser states in the Aegean and on the coast of Asia Minor furnished tribute or, in three cases, ships ; Athens provided the bulk of the armaments, the generals, and, in spite of a more or less imaginary " Imperial Congress " at Delos, the whole control of policy. In 453 B.C. the Treasury of the Confederacy was transferred from Delos to Athens.

A parallel has been drawn [1] between the Athenian and the British Empires, and certainly they have this in common that, while Canada, Australia, and the other " Dominions " are internally self governing, the British Cabinet alone (or almost alone) controls foreign policy and provides, at ordinary times, the main part of Imperial defence. But there is this big difference that, whereas the bond of union in the British Empire (meaning, for the purposes of the present parallel, the " White " Empire), is common blood and common traditions, the Athenian Empire began as a Confederacy for a single limited purpose, the Persian War. When the war was over, the " Empire " should, by the deeds of its foundation, have come to an end. But it often happens that institutions founded for one purpose prolong their lives for another. The East India Company was founded to trade ; afterwards it began to govern, and it continued to govern after it had been forbidden to trade. The Confederacy of Delos was founded for war ; it rapidly became a great area of Free Trade. Trade followed the flag ; the Athenian currency, which was one of the few honest currencies of Greece, the silver " owls " from Laureion, became the medium of exchange throughout the Aegean. The Athenian fleet stamped out the pirates who had previously made such trade impossible. Then the Athenian law courts became a

[1] *The Commonwealth of Nations*, by L. Curtis, Ch. I.

Court of Appeal for commercial cases throughout the Confederacy. Then Athens, like the East India Company after her, found she had to make herself responsible for the maintenance of order in the cities of the Confederacy, and this usually meant the maintenance in power of the democratic or pro-Athenian party. In 466 one of the Confederate states, the island of Naxos, rebelled and was conquered by Athens. The Confederacy had become an Empire, a " Tyranny," unashamed.

The material benefits of empire could never permanently reconcile the once free Greeks of the islands to Athenian tyranny. Only by broadening the base of the empire, by making the islanders fellow citizens, could the tyranny be ended and the greatness of Athens maintained. It was thus that Rome (as will be shown in the next essay), gradually transformed her tyranny into something like a " Commonwealth " by the extension of Roman citizenship to the provincials. Athens never took this step. Indeed, she took a decisive step in the opposite direction. " It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the fate of her empire was sealed by the law of Pericles in 451, by which the franchise was restricted to those who could establish Athenian descent on both sides. It was not merely that the process of amalgamation through intermarriage was abruptly checked ; what was more serious was that a hard and fast line was drawn, once for all, between the small body of privileged citizens, and the great mass of unprivileged subjects." [1]

The tyranny quickly assumed the form of financial extortion. The tribute of the allies had been originally fixed by the careful calculations of Aristides " the Just," on the assumption that there would be a campaign against Persia every year, and that the Treasury would have to bear the whole expense of the campaign. Both assumptions proved unfounded ; the war was intermittent and many of the

[1] E. M. Walker, " Article on Greek History " in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* ; also published in book form by B. H. Blackwell.

campaigns paid their own expenses in booty. Thus the balance in the Imperial Treasury grew ; what was to be done with it ? Here Pericles took his most glorious, and at the same time his most unscrupulous, decision. The tribute of the " Allies " was spent on the adornment of Athens. The tribute was Athena's ; it should be housed in a temple worthy of her, the Parthenon, the Treasure House of the Virgin goddess. And the Parthenon was but the centre-piece of a vast architectural scheme, begun but never completed. Peace was finally concluded with Persia in 448 and the Parthenon was begun in 447 B.C. Those next sixteen years were a time of feverish building in Athens. Sculptors and architects, skilled craftsmen in marble and stone and metal and ivory, built up the great design, and the pride of Athens grew higher and higher. Modern economists have shaken their heads sadly over all this " unproductive expenditure " ; yet the hotel-keepers of Athens to-day are still drawing dividends (at what rate of interest ?) from the capital invested by Pericles.

The war of the Athenian Empire against Persia had achieved its purpose, the final liberation of the Asiatic Greek cities, by the double victory by land and sea at the mouth of the river Eurymedon in 468. But ancient wars had a way of prolonging themselves in a spirit of adventure or piracy, after their serious purpose had been secured. For another twenty years after the battles of the Eurymedon the Persian War continued in a series of ambitious exploits. Cimon, the victor at the Eurymedon, son of Miltiades, victor of Marathon, was the leader of the party that stood for alliance with Sparta and war with Persia, and one of the first actions associated with the name of Pericles was an attack upon Cimon, after his return in 461 from an expedition to help the Spartans to subdue a rebellion of their slave population, the Helots. The Spartans had insulted Athens by refusing Cimon's help, and on his return Cimon was ostracised, that is to say, banished by vote of the Assembly. However, the Persian War continued, and in 459 Athens sent out a great

expedition, which ended in disaster, to wrest Egypt from Persia. Later on, Cimon was recalled and in 450 led an expedition against Cyprus. His death during these operations gave the peace party their chance, and the Persian War was brought to an end. Pericles was now the most powerful man in Athens. Thucydides, the son of Melesias (not the historian), the leader of the Cimonian or conservative party, tried to get him ostracised in 443 ; the result was the ostracising of Thucydides himself.

We cannot be certain what attitude Pericles adopted towards the Egyptian and Cyprian expeditions. He was probably already anxious to terminate the Persian War, but he was also anxious to secure a stable corn supply for Athens, and both Egypt and Cyprus were possible corn-exporters. Athens, like other commercial and industrial communities since, had found that commercial prosperity involved dependence on a foreign food-supply. To-day export of grain is a regular industry of great tracts of the earth's surface, and England, for example, has no need to coax foreign food to the English market ; rather, she has at times considered the advisability of limiting its import in the interest of the farmer at home. But in the ancient world the growth of corn for export was a novelty, and the would-be foreign purchaser had difficulty in finding the goods for sale. Since Egypt and Cyprus proved impossible, Pericles turned his attention to the countries on the shore of the Black Sea, and paid a visit with an Athenian fleet to the lands beyond the Bosphorus, organising a corn supply from these regions through commercial treaties. Thus the narrow channels between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean became an artery on which the life of the heart of the Empire depended, and Sestos, on the narrows of the Dardanelles, was the Gibraltar of Athens. When the Spartans secured the command of the Dardanelles in 405, Athens fell, and the Peloponnesian War ended.

Periclean Athens was not content with an Eastwards policy

alone. Greek colonies had long been established in Italy and Sicily, and Athenian traders made their way thither and, when the policy of foreign states hampered trade, they demanded from their government, as traders will in such cases, an aggressive and imperial foreign policy. Sometimes the flag follows trade. In 443 Pericles attempted both to found an Athenian colony at Thurii, in the gulf of Tarentum, and to realise at the same time his dream of Athens as the metropolis of a confederated Greece. The colony was to be a Panhellenic (all-Greek) settlement, and all Greece, indeed, accepted the invitation to take part in the enterprise. Yet the result proved that the two ideas in Pericles' mind were incompatible, and that Athens was not the metropolis of Greece, however much she might wish, or even deserve, to be. An anti-Athenian party quickly got control of the colony, and the upholders of the Periclean ideal, among them the historian Herodotus, returned to Athens disillusioned.

It was, in fact, the Western policy of Athens that led to the coalition of her enemies and to the Peloponnesian War.

We owe to a surviving fragment of contemporary comedy a list of Athenian imports in the heyday of the Empire.[1] Actually the list was made during the fourth year of the Peloponnesian War, as though to show that Athens' control of the seas was unimpaired. Hides and vegetable relish came from Cyrene, grain and meat from Italy, pork and cheese from Syracuse, salts and papyrus from Egypt, frankincense from Syria, cypress wood from Crete, ivory from Africa, chestnuts and almonds from Paphlagonia, dates and fine wheat flour from Phoenicia, and rugs and cushions from Carthage. We have no such picturesque list of what Athens exported in return. But we know that, like England to-day, she paid in part by the " invisible exports " of her carrying trade, and, for the rest, mainly in manufactured articles. Athenian pottery has been found all over the Mediterranean lands.

[1] Quoted from Zimmern's *The Greek Commonwealth.*

(iv) THE COMING OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

A parallel has sometimes been drawn between modern Europe and ancient Greece, in which Athens, the commercial and imperial democracy, is paired with England, and Sparta with Germany. Of the resemblance of Athens and England the reader can judge for himself ; that of Sparta and Germany is so superficial as to be well nigh valueless. Sparta, it is true, was " continental," and dominated by a militarist oligarchy, but there the resemblance ends. Sparta had few of the merits and few of the defects of Prussianised Germany. For the Spartans were above all things stupid ; they despised the arts and the sciences and everything associated with " progress," whether material or spiritual. At the same time, they were quite unaggressive, very anxious to leave their neighbours alone if they could be left alone themselves. It was Corinth that dragged Sparta all unwillingly into the Peloponnesian War by taunting her with her lost leadership of the Greek world. The true Spartans or Spartiates, the Spartan citizens, were a small and continually diminishing oligarchy, ruling with brutal violence a subject population of serfs, the Perioeci and the Helots. Foreign war was dreaded since it thinned the ranks of the small Spartan oligarchy. The purpose of the wonderfully thorough military organisation, for which everything else in Sparta was sacrificed, was not foreign aggression, but tyranny at home. Sparta was self-contained, agricultural ; there was no Spartan Piraeus.

Posterity has overrated the merits of the Spartans, probably for two reasons : first, the fame of the isolated and immortal sacrifice of Leonidas and his men at Thermopylae, and secondly, strange as it may seem, the testimony of the Athenians, and particularly of Plato. When Athenian democracy had revealed its weakness, Athenian critics enforced their criticisms by drawing an expurgated and rose-coloured picture of Spartan stability and sobriety. In just the same way the Victorian critics, Carlyle, Ruskin, and

Matthew Arnold, expounded Prussian efficiency and state control for the admiration of English readers.[1] The cure for admiration of Sparta is reading Spartan history.

Against the second and more formidable of the two Persian invasions, Athens and Sparta, not without mutual suspicions, had stood together. If the Athenians were the heroes of Salamis, the Spartans were the heroes of Thermopylae and Plataea. When the Persians were off the soil of Greece, Sparta withdrew from the war, being uninterested in the Greeks of Asia Minor, but the friendship of Sparta and Athens was maintained by the Athenian, Cimon. The first blow to the alliance was dealt, as has already been recorded, from the Spartans' side. In 464 B.C. the Helots revolted in the confusion following an earthquake, and the Spartans appealed for aid from their neighbours. Cimon led out an Athenian army in response, but the Spartans turned round on the Athenians and told them flatly that their help was not wanted. Apparently the Spartans feared the infection of Athenian democratic ideals more than they desired the help of Athenian soldiers. This wanton insult ruined the pro-Spartan policy of Cimon, and it was on his return to Athens that, as has been already mentioned, Pericles attacked him and secured his ostracism.

Between 458 and 445 B.C. there was a good deal of intermittent warfare between Athens on one side and Sparta and Corinth on the other, the nature of which helps to explain the greater Peloponnesian War which followed in 431 B.C. We are here covering the period during which Pericles was the most conspicuous statesman, but not yet the supreme controller, of Athens, and it is impossible to say how far the Athenian policy of these years can be regarded as his own.

Athens found an ally in Argos, the chief rival of Sparta in the Peloponnese. She succeeded in destroying her nearest

[1] Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, Ruskin's *Political Economy of Prussia* (Appendix to *A Crown of Wild Olive*), Matthew Arnold's *Friendship's Garland*.

and bitterest enemy, Aegina, an island which threatened the Piraeus much as Heligoland, if in British hands, would threaten German naval bases.[1] She made an alliance with Megara, situated on the Corinthian isthmus, more than half way to Corinth, and built " Long Walls " connecting Megara with her two ports on either sea. She captured Naupactus which commands, from the north side, the narrows of the Corinthian gulf. A Spartan army marched north, and sought to buttress up Thebes, the capital of Boeotia, as a state threatening Attica from the landward side. Athenians fought Spartans and Thebans in Boeotia ; lost, won, and lost again (battles of Tanagra, Oenophyta, Coronea). Athens secured control of Achaea, the province on the southern shore of the Corinthian gulf. Then a rebellion against Athens broke out in the great island of Euboea, and Megara and Achaea were lost. The great Egyptian fiasco (see page 14), also occurred during these years. Exhausted by her efforts, Athens signed a Thirty Years' Peace in 445 B.C., accepting the loss of Megara and Achaea.

The important points in this rapid survey are Megara, Achaea, Naupactus. Their possession was the opening, and their loss the closing, of the " door of the West." The possession of any one of them was of little use without the other two. Historians have generally assumed that the isthmus of Megara was important to Athens as a point of military defence, a sort of " bridge of Horatius," where a small Athenian force could hold a large Peloponnesian force at bay. This may have been taken into account, but the isthmus was probably also quite equally important as a passage from the eastern to the western seas.[2] For we must remember that the Greeks, like the Romans after them (and

[1] Great Britain surrendered Heligoland to Germany some years before the Germans began to build their navy.

[2] Notice the two aspects of an isthmus. Panama, for example, might be viewed as either (*a*) the narrowest part of the land route from North to South America, or as (*b*) the shortest way (quite apart from the canal) of getting from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

indeed all peoples until the modern sailing ship was invented by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century), were mere children in the art of navigation. The passage between Sicily and Italy had the terrors of Scylla and Charybdis for them, and the rounding of Cape Malea, on the south coast of the Peloponnese, was, during half the year, as formidable an undertaking as the rounding of Cape Horn. Hence the maritime value of the isthmus of Megara, and the control of the narrow part of the Corinthian gulf between Naupactus and Achaea. Without these, Athens could hardly rival Corinth and her colony Corcyra (Corfu) in the Western Seas, for she must either go round by Cape Malea, or pay the tolls levied by the owners of the isthmus. With Megara, Naupactus, and Achaea in Athenian possession, on the other hand, her Western might match her Eastern predominance.

After the peace of 445 B.C., by which Athens lost Megara and Achaea, it was clear that she stood at the parting of the ways. On the one hand, she might accept her defeat, make the most of her Eastern Empire, and trust to her commercial enterprise, unaided by naval and military control, to secure her a fair share of the Western trade. On the other hand, she might adopt the principle of "world-power or nothing," fight Corinth and Sparta for the control of all Greece, and perhaps add the great Greek commercial city of Syracuse to the roll of her tributaries. Pericles stood for the former policy; he did not underrate the imperial mission of Athens, but he conceived it differently, less in terms of power, more in terms of culture. Athens was to be "an education to all Greece"—Thucydides put the phrase into his mouth—and for that education peace was needed. Pericles now secured for Athens fourteen years peace (445-431 B.C.), a priceless fourteen years for Athens and all the world, seeing how he used them. They were the years of the great building scheme. But all the time the party of aggression was gathering strength. Towards the end of the time, this party (it has been called the party of the Piraeus) was strong

enough to have overthrown him if he had not put himself at its head. At last, to forestall its leaders, he adopted its policy in the hope of reducing the now inevitable war within the narrowest possible compass.[1]

The spark that fired the powder magazine was a quarrel between Corinth and her colony, Corcyra. The great age of Greek colonisation was long before the Persian Wars. The Corinthians had colonised Corcyra in 734 B.C. A Greek colony, once founded, was usually independent of its mother city, and though a certain impropriety attached to wars between mother and daughter cities, the impropriety was not sufficient to prevent such wars taking place. Corcyra and Corinth were the second and the third sea-powers of the Greek world, and their bitter rivalry had long been notorious. In 434 B.C. embassies from both cities came to Athens to plead for her alliance against the other. The Corinthians pointed out that an Athenian alliance with Corcyra would be a virtual breach of the Thirty Years' Peace. The Corcyraeans boldly and cynically took the line that " the Great War " was bound to come, and that Athens would then find the support of Corcyra very useful. Also, they reminded the Athenians, perhaps somewhat slyly, that " Corcyra is conveniently situated for a coasting voyage to Italy and Sicily, so as either to prevent a fleet from coming from those countries to the aid of the Peloponnesians or to help a fleet from here on its way thither." [2]

Athens attempted an impossible compromise, a " defensive " alliance with Corcyra, and an absurd little contingent of ten Athenian ships was sent into Corcyraean waters, to look on if the one hundred and ten Corcyrean ships attacked the Corinthian one hundred and fifty, and to fight if the

[1] In this interpretation of the history of 445-431 I am following Mr. F. M. Cornford. For the full statement of his view and its defence against other interpretations, the reader is referred to the first four chapters of his book, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*.

[2] Speech of the Corcyraeans in Thucydides, whose speeches are not, of course, verbatim reports, but dramatic reconstructions.

Corinthians attacked the Corcyraeans. An indecisive battle followed, in which the Athenians became involved. Athens had struck a half-hearted and useless blow, but a blow sufficient to break the Thirty Years' Peace. Being in the wrong, she took a step further in the same direction. The city of Potidaea, standing on the most westerly of the three finger-like peninsulas that jut out from the Macedonian coast, was a tribute-paying member of the Athenian Empire, but at the same time, in respect of its origin, a colony of Corinth, ruled by magistrates annually appointed by the mother city. Athens ordered Potidaea to dismantle part of its wall and to sever its connection with Corinth. Potidaea refused, and war began between Athens and Corinth around this city in 432 B.C.

Meanwhile a blow was struck nearer home—at Megara. In 433 some members of the party of aggression carried a decree in the Assembly excluding Megarian produce from the Athenian market. In the next year, Pericles himself, hoping presumably to moderate the war party, by putting himself at the head of it and thus keeping the lead in his own hands, carried a further decree excluding Megarian traders from every port of the Athenian Empire. It was a threat of " join us or starve," and the Megarians gallantly prepared to starve. In the same year (432) the Peloponnesian States held a conference at Sparta, and Corinth dragged the reluctant and unenterprising Spartans into war with Athens.

The real quarrel lay between two rival commercial imperialist groups, the Athenian " party of the Piraeus " and Corinth. The stakes were the control of the West. The nominal leaders on each side, Pericles and Archidamus, King of Sparta, must have regarded the declaration of war much as Walpole in later days viewed that later declaration, of which he said, " They are ringing the bells now ; they will soon be wringing their hands." Both Pericles and Archidamus worked to limit the scope of the war and restore an early peace.

Athens was supreme at sea but entirely out-matched on land, and Pericles saw that, though Athens was not an island by nature, she must make herself one by artifice. So the farmsteads and villages of Attica were abandoned, and their population crowded into Athens and the Piraeus and the space between the Long Walls that connected the two cities. Such a policy emphasised the inconveniences, while minimising the glories, of war. Also, it strengthened the peace party by bringing the country-dwelling citizens into the capital, where, for once in a way, they could vote alongside of the town-dwelling citizens, who were never far from the market place and the Assembly. These country folk had nothing to gain by the war and everything to lose by it, but normally took little part in the activities of the Assembly, which they had not time to visit. As the summer of 431 B.C. advanced, Archidamus led an army into Attica, and ravaged its farms and villages. Athens looked on, unmolesting and unmolested. By way of counterstroke, the Athenian fleet sailed round the Peloponnese, failed in an attack on its western coast, but captured some points north of the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf. Such was the deliberately tame beginning of the war.

At the end of a year of warfare it was the custom at Athens to hold a kind of memorial service for those who had given their lives for their country, and an eminent man was chosen to deliver an oration in their honour. On this occasion Pericles was chosen. What speech he delivered we do not know, but Thucydides has put into his mouth for the occasion a splendid apology for Athens, her Empire, and his own conception of her destiny.

" Our government," [1] he said, " is not copied from those of our neighbours ; we are an example to them, rather than they to us. Our constitution is named a democracy because it is in the hands not of the few but of the many. But our laws secure equal justice for all in their private disputes, and

[1] Mr. Zimmern's translation in *The Greek Commonwealth.*

our public opinion welcomes and honours talent in every branch of achievement. . . . We acknowledge the restraint of reverence; we are obedient to whomsoever is set in authority and to the laws, more especially to those which offer protection to the oppressed. Yet ours is no work-a-day city only. No other provides so many recreations for the spirit—contests and sacrifices all the year round, and beauty in our public buildings to cheer the heart and delight the eye day by day. . . .

" We are lovers of beauty without extravagance, and lovers of wisdom without unmanliness. Wealth is to us not mere material for vainglory but an opportunity for achievement. . . . Our citizens attend both to public and private duties, and do not allow absorption in their own affairs to interfere with their knowledge of the city's. We differ from other states in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life, not as " quiet," but as useless. . . . In a word I claim that our city as a whole is an education to Greece."

Proud words: could they be ascribed to any other statesman addressing any other audience, without absurdity? Are they absurd, as addressed to fifth-century Athenians at the climax of their destiny, by their greatest statesman? When Thucydides published them thirty years later, the war was over and Athens had been utterly beaten; yet Thucydides did not think his estimate of Athens under Pericles had thereby been falsified, and twenty-three centuries have upheld his judgment.

(v) THE END

To conduct a war which you believe ought to have been avoided, in order that you may limit its scope and keep out of power the party that has forced you into declaring it—this was the task of Pericles, and it is a task which passes the wit of man. Pericles began to lose control. The first attacks were made upon his friends. Phidias, the greatest of his sculptors, was prosecuted for embezzlement and

triumphantly acquitted ; prosecuted again for impiety, and died in prison before his trial. Another friend, Anaxagoras, the Ionian philosopher, who probably possessed more influence over Pericles' mind than any other man, was also prosecuted for impiety, imprisoned, and afterwards exiled. A religious revolution was taking place during these years, and the educated classes were gradually losing belief in the traditional gods and goddesses. Pericles and his circle were Freethinkers, and the passions of war roused the passions of heresy-hunting. His enemies then struck nearer home, and brought a charge of impiety against Aspasia, the brilliantly gifted woman who was Pericles' mistress. The prosecutors poured out upon her all the garbage of their own imaginations ; Pericles personally conducted her defence, and she was acquitted. Then the statesman himself was attacked on a charge of misappropriating public funds. He was found guilty—the verdict may be assumed to have been purely " political "—fined, suspended from his " Generalship," but reinstated at the next election. A few months later, in 429 B.C., he died.

But during these prosecutions a disaster worse than any possible defeat in the field had befallen Athens—a disaster which a modern man would have foreseen, but which might well strike the men of Athens as the direct intervention of angry gods. Athens was appallingly overcrowded with the influx of population from Attica. The Athenians were much better than we are at building temples, but they were much worse at laying drains. A plague broke out, and killed perhaps a quarter of the population.

The plague may have killed Pericles. It certainly killed Periclean Athens. Henceforth there were two parties, violently opposed and both wrong-headed. One simply longed for peace, and despaired of the greatness of Athens. The other despised peace, and misunderstood that greatness ; its leader was the demagogue Cleon, and as a rule it kept the control of the Assembly. Thucydides' history is a record

II

JULIUS CAESAR (102-44 B.C.)

(i) ROME BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONS

THE Athens of Pericles was a city-state which had taken the first steps towards becoming the ruler of a great empire, and was already experiencing the difficulties that empire brings, the social dislocation of the life of the metropolis, and the rival claims of "provincial home-rule" and central control. Then, in their ambition to enlarge their empire, the Athenians provoked a war with a coalition of their neighbours, and in that war their empire was lost. Rome was, like Athens, a city-state; like Athens, it drifted into becoming the centre of an empire; like Athens it thereby provoked a formidable enemy and was involved in a life and death struggle; unlike Athens, it emerged from that struggle decisively victorious, and gradually came to realise that, as a result, the whole Mediterranean world was at its mercy. In spite of many differences, there is thus a general parallel between the Peloponnesian War and the struggle of Rome and Carthage, the so-called First and Second Punic Wars (264-202 B.C.), and their different results constitute one of the fundamental differences between the histories of Athens and of Rome.

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responded to the national character and became democratic, a government under which quick wits and eloquence were the passports to power. The Romans, on the other hand, were slow, stolid, conservative. Family tradition was intensely strong, and unquestioning reverence was paid to the great families, the blood relations and descendants of the historic heroes. The Athenian Areopagus loses its authority so early that we are almost entirely in the dark as to its original powers and character. The Roman Senate, on the other hand, dominates Roman history, first as the motive power of the political machine, and afterwards as the drag upon the wheels.

The Senate was a kind of House of Lords, as regards its composition, though membership was not actually based on hereditary succession. During the last three centuries B.C. the Senate consisted of (i) all those who were holding or had held any of the annual magistracies of Rome (consuls, praetors, aediles), (ii) a remainder of members, bringing the total up to three hundred, nominated by the censors, officials who also exercised certain religious functions and were supposed to control the morality of the citizens. As the annual magistrates were elected by the Assembly of the People, the Comitia, it might have been expected that a Senatorial career was open to talent irrespective of birth. But here the peculiarity of the Roman character comes in. Though election was nominally free, actually only members of old Senatorial families stood a chance of election.[1] The election of a *novus homo* was a rare and even a revolutionary event. Thus the Senate, though not actually a house of hereditary legislators, came to be the close preserve of the ruling families.

[1] The Senatorial families were called *nobiles*: not *patricians*. The struggle between patricians and plebeians belongs to a very early period of Roman history. Many Senatorial families of the last two centuries B.C. were "plebeian," and the distinction of patrician and plebeian had only an antiquarian interest in the period we are dealing with.

It was the Senate rather than the consuls that ruled Rome, for, as the consuls only held office for a year and could not be re-elected till after an interval, they did not often gain sufficient experience and prestige to become more than the mouthpieces and the instruments of the Council which nominally could do no more than advise them. Their authority was further diminished by the fact that the consuls held office two at a time, each being a drag upon the " monarchical " ambitions of his colleague. The early consuls (*e.g.* in the Punic Wars) commanded armies. At a later date the consuls only took up military duties (as pro-consuls) in the year following their consulships.

Side by side with this oligarchy there had existed from the first a democratic Assembly of the People in thirty " tribes." As early as 268 B.C. the Assembly secured the right of making laws over the head of the Senate on the proposal of one of their elected officials, the tribunes, but until the revolutionary period begins with Tiberius Gracchus in 133 B.C. the tribunes acted merely as the mouthpieces of the Senate.

It was the Senate that defeated Hannibal, the heroism of organised mediocrity triumphing over the heroism of isolated genius. But the very completeness of its triumph opened the road to its ruin. In the next seventy years (200-130 B.C.) Rome was spoiled by success. Victorious wars were fought all round the Mediterranean ; Macedonia was conquered, and Greece " freed," only to become a virtual dependency of Rome, Corinth, the old mercantile enemy of Athens, being sacked and destroyed in 146 B.C. The western half of Asia Minor became the Roman province of Asia. Carthage was destroyed in the same year as Corinth, and its territory became the Roman province of Africa. Egypt and Numidia (Algiers) became " allies " at the mercy of Rome. Provinces were also annexed covering the Mediterranean coasts of Spain and Gaul.

The most important of these conquests at the time were

those in the East, which made Rome the ruler of fragments of the old Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. When a poor, primitive, and warlike nation conquers a rich, sophisticated, and corrupt civilisation, the military event is followed by a reverse process in which the conquered convert the conquerors. Rome became gradually Hellenised, just as the Teutonic barbarians who invaded the Roman Empire five and six centuries later became gradually Romanised. In the long run and in the main, the change was for the good. The Greek world had much to teach Rome, which Rome needed to learn. All Roman literature bears the imprint of Greek tuition. But vices often prove more rapidly infectious than virtues. The old Roman oligarchy was transformed from an oligarchy of farmers and soldiers into an oligarchy of *nouveaux riches*. The old Roman moral tradition broke down under the strain. One of the last great Romans of the old school, Aemilius Paulus, the conqueror of Macedonia, closed down the gold mines in that country, because he knew that Mammon is the enemy of Mars. Ten years later they were re-opened and leased to a small ring of Roman capitalists.

Rome in fact became a great centre of commerce. A new aristocracy grew up beside the Senatorial families, the Equites, or Knights, but they were no more closely associated with horsemanship or "chivalry" than the Knights whose names figure in our own lists of "Birthday Honours." The Equites were the new capitalists, an aristocracy of money-makers as distinct from the aristocracy of government and war. But the Senators too forsook war for the spoils of war, and treated politics as a means of pillage. The provincial governors (pro-consuls) organised robbery by government on a scale perhaps never equalled before or since. On their return from their provinces, having paid away as much of their fortune as was needed to bribe the judges to acquit them on the charge of extortion generally brought against them, they retired and purchased vast estates in Italy, which they

worked with gangs of imported slaves, thereby displacing the old yeoman population. The ex-yeomen in their turn flocked to Rome, either driven by necessity or by a lust for wealth on their own account. Some rose to wealth, but the bulk went to swell the ever growing poverty-stricken proletariat of the capital.

Meanwhile the recruitment of the armies themselves became more and more difficult. The old Roman armies had been the flower of Roman youth. The rich now became more and more reluctant to serve, and the soldiers were picked more and more from the lower-middle classes of the population, drawn not by patriotism but by the hope of plunder. In the latter part of the period of conquest, the military campaigns themselves, especially those in Spain, were a scandal and a disgrace to Roman arms. It looked as if the new Empire would be disintegrated by its own vices.

(ii) THE FIRST TWO GENERATIONS OF REVOLUTION (133-78 B.C.)

The first onslaught upon this moral and political degeneracy was the work of Tiberius Gracchus. Gracchus was a noble by birth ; he had had an elaborate Greek education, which had made him familiar with the political speculations of the Greek philosophers, and he shared the delusion of some of these thinkers that deep-rooted social diseases could be easily cured by radical legislation. He had also served in the Spanish campaigns and knew the urgency of reform. His plan was an ingenious device to solve simultaneously two pressing problems, the destitution in Rome and the decay of the military spirit. The Roman State was the landlord of large tracts of conquered territory in the south of Italy, which were leased to the new rich, or even in some cases occupied without rental by them. Let the State resume its ownership, and cut the land up into small holdings. The poor of Rome would return to the healthy agricultural

life from which they had been driven, and the renewed population of healthy agriculturists would supply a stream of sturdy recruits for the army.

It seemed delightfully simple. Tiberius was elected tribune (133 B.C.), and revived the ancient traditions of his office by proposing legislation independently of Senatorial approval. The landlord class were in a difficulty. It was doubtful if they could control a majority in the Senate, for many Senators were still poor enough to be uninterested in the woes of the rich. So the landlords made use of one of the many absurdities of the old Roman constitution. They put up a rival tribune to " veto " the proposal of his colleague. Thereupon the Assembly voted the deposition of the vetoing tribune. Such legislative machinery as this could not but be a positive provocation to illegality and riot. Riots, in fact, ensued, and Tiberius was killed. However, a new epoch had begun, and parties were defined ; on the one side the *Optimates*, conservatives, or oligarchs, on the other the *Populares*, or democrats. The former party is often identified with the Senate, but it usually formed no more than a resolute and domineering minority even there. The bulk of the Senators were drifters who followed whatever course seemed to make for peace and quietness at the moment. The *Equites*, again, the mercantile class, swung from side to side according as they imagined their immediate interests to lie with the Oligarchs or the Democrats. Senatorial exclusiveness drove them towards the Democrats ; democratic appeals to force drove them towards the Oligarchs.

Ten years later the leadership of the Democrats was taken up by another tribune, Caius Gracchus, the brother of Tiberius. Tiberius had been an enthusiastic optimist with a single legislative idea ; Caius was an extremely ingenious radical politician. He was a master of the modern art of framing a complicated legislative programme, each item in which will attract a certain class of voters to support all the

others. It is worth while sketching the programme of Caius Gracchus in outline, both for its own sake, and also because its author is, more than any other Roman, the forerunner of Julius Caesar.

First, the Equites were bribed over to the Democratic side by a law which gave to them, instead of to the Senators, control of the courts in which provincial governors were tried for extortion. This law was carried and remained in force for forty years. It did not much benefit the wretched provincials, since the Equites were the partners of the pro-consuls in the work of spoliation. It merely meant that the governors had in future to be careful to allow the merchants a fair share of the plunder. Secondly, a new tax on all produce in the province of Asia was farmed out to capitalists. This system was constantly extended, and re-doubled the pillaging of the provinces and the corruption of Rome. The agents of the tax-farmers are the " publicans " of the New Testament. So much for securing the support of the new rich. Caius then carried a law by which the State purchased corn and sold it at a loss to the population of Rome—a permanent bread subsidy. The Agrarian Law of Tiberius was re-enacted, and contracts issued for the construction of new roads in Italy, which would increase the prosperity of Italian agriculture. Then, in order to relieve the over-population of Rome, Gracchus proposed to refound Carthage as a mercantile centre ; he hoped to induce capitalists and labourers to distribute themselves from Rome to the various natural trading centres of the Mediterranean. Finally, he proposed to extend Roman citizenship to the whole free population of " Italy " (which at that date excluded the valley of the Po). This would have given various much coveted privileges to the Italian population, and avoided a terrible war which followed thirty years later ; but, since the principle of representative government was unknown to the Romans, it would not have done anything appreciable to broaden the basis of political democracy. These two last

laws were not carried, and Caius, like his brother, was killed in a riot.

Fourteen years later the diseases of the body politic had broken out in a form which even the most conservative could not ignore. Rome was involved in war with Jugurtha, King of Numidia. Jugurtha was an enterprising barbarian and took the measure of his foes ; he bought them, and reduced the war against himself to a transparent fraud. The Roman populace, who were always more keenly imperialist than the aristocrats, broke away at last from their allegiance to the Senatorial families, and elected as consul a *novus homo*, the rough and ready soldier of fortune, Marius (107 B.C.). During Marius's campaign Jugurtha was betrayed by one of his allies and his power overthrown. Two years later, to meet a graver emergency, Marius was again elected consul. Two tribes of German barbarians, the Cimbri and the Teutones, had migrated from their home beyond the Rhine into Gaul, and pursued their devastating advance into the Roman province on the Mediterranean shores of France. The two aristocratic consuls of 105 B.C. had been sent against them and utterly defeated. Marius was now, contrary to all traditions, elected consul in five successive years (104-100 B.C.), first to meet the German peril, and afterwards as a reward for destroying it.

Marius, besides his victories, made a permanent contribution to the development of the revolution by his army reforms. Hitherto service in the army had been preserved as a privilege of those who possessed, as we now say, a "stake in the country," the propertied classes, however modest the property. Hence the increasing difficulties of recruitment, which the Gracchi had sought in vain to solve. Marius first threw open the ranks to all comers. Probably neither he nor anyone else realised the political consequences that would follow. Henceforth the armies of Rome were mere mercenary forces, devoted, not to the State, but to successful generals who recruited them and provided them

with plunder. Henceforth Rome was at the mercy of her successful soldiers. Civilian reformers such as the Gracchi gave place to politically-minded field-marshals.

But Marius was no statesman. His only ideas were hatred of the Oligarchs and an apparent desire to continue his consulships for the rest of his life. With the latter end in view he allied himself, in his fifth successive consulship, with an unprincipled tribune, Saturninus. Saturninus sought to outdo the Gracchi, and frightened Marius into joining the Senate against him. The Democratic party was broken and discredited, and the Oligarchs returned to power (100 B.C.).

The restoration of the Oligarchs was due to no merits of their own, but simply to the violence and folly of the Democrats. Ten fairly uneventful years passed (100-90 B.C.), and then two more storms, from different quarters, broke over the singularly unseaworthy ship of state. The nearer and consequently more menacing peril was the Social War, the rebellion of the Italians (principally the Southern Italians) to secure Roman citizenship. The claim was irresistible, and was conceded after a most destructive and wholly unnecessary campaign. Thus Rome ceased, in theory, to be a city-state; in practice, of course, the control of the assembly remained with those of the citizens who lived in Rome. The really valuable privileges of citizenship were personal and legal rather than political. A hundred and fifty years later, when Roman citizenship had been widely extended among the upper and middle classes throughout the Empire, we find that St. Paul's Roman citizenship protected him from the grosser forms of local tyranny.

The second peril was Mithridates. Mithridates, King of Pontus, on the south-eastern shore of the Black Sea, was an ambitious Oriental Sultan, aiming at the creation of a great Eastern Empire, and posing not unsuccessfully as the champion of the old Greek civilisation of Asia Minor against the rapacity of the Roman conqueror. Various Roman generals

were defeated in Asia Minor, and the armies of Mithridates passed across into Greece. The Senate entrusted the command against him to Sulla, a very competent soldier and an aristocrat, and Sulla joined his troops in southern Italy and prepared to embark. Thereupon Marius, whose powers of self-control, never conspicuous, had been greatly diminished by drink, seized Rome, and induced the Assembly to deprive Sulla of his command in favour of himself. Sulla marched straight to Rome with his army, secured a counter-revolution, and set out for Greece (87 B.C.). As soon as he was gone the Marians returned, and regained control of the capital.

Then followed an intrigue the like of which it would be hard to find outside Roman history. Sulla, with a small but efficient army, was conducting a successful campaign against the armies of Mithridates in Greece. His great exploit was the siege and capture of Athens. The Democrats sent out their own general, Flaccus, to supersede Sulla. Flaccus proved to be more of a patriot than a partisan, and acted as Sulla's ally. So he was murdered by one of his officers, Fimbria, who felt that the claims of party politics came first. Sulla was now between two enemies, a Roman and an Asiatic. Realising that the Roman was the more implacable, he patched up the best peace he could get with Mithridates, turned on his Roman enemy, and broke him.

Then came the day of vengeance. Sulla seems to have been but little interested in political questions. He was an aristocrat, a scholar, and a soldier, and he despised both parties equally. Had the Democrats been willing, after the collapse of Fimbria, to give him fair play, he would probably have left them to their own devices. He was willing and even anxious to return to Rome as the conqueror of Mithridates, but, if not, he would return as the conqueror of Rome. The Democrats (now led by Cinna, for Marius was dead) preferred Sulla as an enemy. For the second time he marched his army on the capital. And now his whole character

seemed to change, or perhaps to reveal its real quality. It was not statesmanship, much less party politics, but furious anger that dictated what followed. Sulla entered Rome and claimed from the Senate the ancient emergency office of Dictator, which gave him powers of life and death over every Roman citizen. Proscription, or murder by martial law, followed. An enormous number—some say five thousand—Democrats were put to death. Landed property was confiscated wholesale and presented to Sulla's veteran soldiers.

Meanwhile the constitution was remodelled. The Assembly was deprived of its legislative powers. The tribunate thus lost its attractiveness, and was further handicapped by a law that no tribune should be afterwards eligible for the higher offices of state. The Senate was doubled in size by the addition of three hundred members drawn from the Equites, and to this new Senate was restored control of the law courts. Having wreaked his vengeance, Sulla laid down his Dictatorship and gave himself up to a life of reckless luxury, which killed him in a year or two (78 B.C.). He had done all that was humanly possible to restore and fortify the powers of an Oligarchy he certainly despised. Probably he cared very little how long his work survived him.

(iii) JULIUS CAESAR AS A PARTY POLITICIAN (78-59 B.C.)

Such was the complicated and unpromising situation when Julius Caesar entered the world of politics; for he was, at the time of the death of Sulla, twenty-four years old. When people ask the question—as they sometimes do—who was the greatest statesman in history, the answer most commonly given is, "Julius Caesar." Whether or not this be the right answer, certain it is that in no period of history were the resources of statesmanship more severely taxed than at Rome in the last century before Christ. It would be

difficult, perhaps impossible, to name any other state at any other period, where the necessity of a complete reconstruction was more pressing, and the lines on which that reconstruction should be carried out more difficult to descry. If we attempt to reduce the problem to simple terms, we shall falsify it, because we shall, by omitting nine-tenths of the difficulties, make the complex look comparatively simple. None the less, it may be of help to suggest that the problem, though essentially one, had three main aspects.

First, there was the problem of the constitution : how to replace the obsolete and corrupt oligarchy of the Senate and yet avoid what seemed, from recent experience, the only alternatives, the rule of mobs and the rule of military adventurers. Secondly, there was the economic and social problem : how to curb the corrupting influence of the capitalist cliques, how to elevate the pauperised masses in the capital, how to check the economic process which was populating the countryside with imported slaves instead of Italian yeomen. Thirdly, there was the imperial problem : how to develop, out of the present tyranny and anarchy of the provinces, an orderly commonwealth of Mediterranean peoples under just and equitable central control. Such were the aspects of the Roman problem as historians see it in retrospect, but it must not be supposed that Julius Caesar, much less any of his contemporaries, ever analysed it out in this simple fashion.

Caesar came of a family ancient and aristocratic, but not politically distinguished in recent times. Indeed, the only notable performance of the family within living memory was that it had provided a wife for the " self-made " Marius. Caesar maintained this connection by marrying the daughter of Cinna. It was apparently a love match. Sulla had ordered him to divorce his wife and he had refused to do so, and the manufacturers of unlikely anecdotes go on to say that Sulla then prophesied the future greatness of the young man, saying that " in him was the stuff of many Mariuses."

Thus, they say, Caesar was predestined by family connection to the Democratic side. But it is easy to make too much of that. Statesmen have a way of finding the party that fits their true character, whatever their family traditions. Caesar was, above all else, a great adventurer. He could not be an Oligarch, for the Oligarchs stood for a system dead and putrescent beyond all hopes of resurrection. The record of the Democrats might hitherto have been as bad as that of the Oligarchs, but at least they were right in their knowledge that the present system was wrong and that a new one must be found. Caesar's whole career is a quest for the new system ; he was fated not to find it, but he created conditions in which its discovery was possible.

Caesar's career falls into three clearly distinguished chronological periods. In the first (78-59 B.C.) he is feeling his way as a Democratic party politician, turning now this way and now that in his search for instruments and allies. This period culminates in the First Triumvirate and Caesar's consulship. The second period (58-50 B.C.) covers the conquest of Gaul. During these years he never set foot in Rome ; to do so would have been, by the terms of all proconsular commands, an act of rebellion. In the third period (49-44 B.C.), Caesar is forced into rebellion ; he conquers the armies of the Oligarchs, and ends his life as absolute master of the Roman world. We are concerned in this section with the first period only.

In 78 B.C. the Democratic party was doubly destroyed. Physically, it had perished in the proscriptions of Sulla ; morally, it had ruined itself by its outrageous policy during the Mithridatic War. Only in Spain a man of singular genius, Sertorius, had unfurled the flag of Democratic rebellion, and was about to make experiments in provincial government from which the Roman world might learn much. What was such a man as Caesar to do ? The road to power through the tribunate had been closed by Sulla. In 77 and 76 B.C. he undertook prosecutions of two provincial

governors for extortion. The juries were composed of Senators, and the governors were acquitted. Having made his demonstration and proved its uselessness, Caesar left Rome and went to a Greek university to study rhetoric. It is, as a rule, only great men who have the humility to take up their education afresh after they have reached the age of twenty-five.[1]

Meanwhile the Sullan constitution was, of course, breaking down. There had already been one rebellion in Italy, organised by a consul, Lepidus. The Mithridatic War was beginning again ; the provinces were worse governed than ever ; piracy had driven the Roman navy and Roman commerce off the seas ; Sertorius ruled Spain ; most appalling of all, in 73 B.C. the slaves of Italy rose in rebellion under Spartacus. The pressure of these alarms compelled the Senate to adopt the revolutionary expedient of appointing emergency military Dictators ; the ordinary Senatorial pro-consuls were too notoriously unsoldierlike. Pompey, a young officer of Sulla, who had never held magisterial office, demanded and obtained the command against Sertorius. Crassus, another Sullan officer and the richest man in Rome, obtained the command against Spartacus. In 71 B.C. both generals had carried their campaigns to victorious completion, and were the heroes of Rome. They were far from inclined to return to the obscurity of private life, as the Sullan laws required. The only alternative course for them was to combine, and bring to life again the Democratic party ; and this was the course they adopted. The Senate was powerless once more. Pompey and Crassus were elected consuls for the year 70, Pompey's election being wholly illegal, as he had not held the junior offices of quaestor, aedile, and praetor. Once in office they tore the Sullan constitution to pieces. The tribunate was restored and the Senatorial control of the law courts abolished. To mark

[1] The most remarkable modern example of this form of humility is Cecil Rhodes.

the new era, Cicero, the rising lawyer and, like Marius, a self-made man, prosecuted and secured the conviction and exile of the Senator Verres, whose government of Sicily had exceeded the average of Senatorial rapacity. It is tempting to suppose that Caesar, who was only four years younger than Pompey and Cicero, played a part behind the scenes in this democratic revolution. But the records are silent; the honours are monopolised by the three most important of his contemporaries.

Yet none of these three was a statesman. Pompey was a soldier; Crassus a financier; Cicero an orator, journalist, and man of letters. The tragedy of their lives—for all three careers ended in tragedy—was that the diseased condition of the Roman world forced them into playing political parts for which they were unsuited. In a well ordered modern community, Pompey would have been an honoured and upright soldier, valued in the field of battle and in the War Office; Crassus would have been a great captain of industry, a Director of Companies, a Governor of the Bank of England, a weighty member of Government Commissions of Enquiry into financial and industrial questions; Cicero would have been one of those men who adorn our political world by bringing into it something of the atmosphere of the quieter and more philosophic world of letters to which in their hearts they really belong—a Lord Bryce or a Lord Morley. Caesar alone of the four was fitted to guide the destinies of an empire, but at that date it was becoming more and more unlikely that anyone would have an opportunity of guiding the destinies of Rome, unless he could first lead a victorious army. To that task, as it happened, Caesar was also equal.

Caesar valued military command because he desired the authority of a statesman. Pompey desired the authority of a statesman because he valued military command; of any other command he was, in fact, incapable. Rome drifted as rudderless after the *coup d'état* of 70 B.C. as before it. Pompey and Crassus quarrelled, as incompetent partners always do.

Crassus drifted back into finance; Pompey sought a new command, and this was not hard to find. There were the pirates; there was Mithridates. The pirates came first, because they had produced a famine in Rome. A tribune was put up to propose for Pompey a wholly unprecedented control of sea and land throughout the Roman Empire for three years, in order that he might suppress piracy. The Senate of course objected; but the facts of the case were overwhelming, and not the least the fact that the proconsuls whom the Senate had employed against the pirates had taken bribes from the enemy, and made their own fortunes by leaving the pirates alone. So the law was carried, and Pompey swept the pirates from the seas. It was not a very difficult task for a competent and honest admiral armed with unlimited authority (68 B.C.).

The Mithridatic command was secured in the same way. For the past six years the Mithridatic campaigns had been conducted by Lucullus, the one eminent man among the Oligarchs of that generation. His name is famous to-day as that of the man who gave the best dinners in antiquity, but, in fact, Lucullus only took up gastronomy after he had been sickened of politics. He was indeed a remarkable man; a really great general, and a man of the old hard school. His ambition was to rival the feats of Alexander and to carry the Roman Empire to the furthest confines of Mesopotamia. One gift only he lacked. He treated his soldiers as if they were patriots fighting for the glory of Rome; he could not master the new arts of the military demagogue leading an army of mercenaries in quest of plunder. At the end of a series of victorious campaigns his soldiers mutinied. Pompey superseded Lucullus in 67 B.C., and for the next five years he was away in the East. Mithridates was conquered; Pontus and Syria over-run. A Roman general stood for the first time in the Temple of the Jews at Jerusalem.

These five years were a period of anxious waiting at Rome. Nothing seemed really worth doing. Pompey would come

home some day, and then all would be at his feet. The two chief events of this period were the alliance of Caesar and Crassus, and the conspiracy of Catiline.

Caesar was finding, like many ambitious politicians since, that little can be done without a lavish supply of money. In 65 B.C. he hoped to hold the office of aedile, and no office gave greater opportunities to the moneyed man, for the aediles were responsible for organising the public festivals and holidays during their year of office. Crassus, on the other hand, was getting tired of mere money making, and longed for a military command with which he could keep his popularity abreast of that of Pompey. For, since his triumph over the slaves, he suffered from the delusion that he had great military gifts. Yet Crassus was politically incompetent, and, like most very rich men, he was politically timid. He needed an agent to conduct his political intrigues, and, if they failed, to take the consequences of their failure. So Caesar sold himself to Crassus, and the result was (i) that Caesar's aedileship was marked by the most brilliant and ostentatious *circenses* ("circuses," official pageants) yet seen in Rome; (ii) a series of ingenious intrigues were set on foot to improve the Roman corn supply by appointing some eminent general—no name mentioned, of course—for the conquest of the great granary of Egypt.[1] All these intrigues failed, partly through the opposition of Cicero, who reached the consulship in the year 63.

The conspiracy of Catiline has attained an extraordinary celebrity owing to the fact that the task of suppressing it fell to the lot of the greatest literary man of the age. In Cicero the instincts of the man of letters were abnormally developed. Every detail, great and small, of his experience of life, must get itself into book form. For his public life it sufficed that his speeches should be edited and published as pamphlets. For his private life he hit upon the ingenious plan of writing a kind of diary of his impressions in the form of letters to

[1] Athens also had hankered after the same flesh pots; see page 14.

Atticus, his friend and " publisher." Eight hundred and fifty letters to Atticus and others were ultimately collected and published. For the record of his more elaborate reflections on politics, morals, and life in general, he revived the literary dialogue of Plato. We can never be sufficiently grateful to the egoism of this most amiable of men. It is thanks to him that we possess a more intimate and familiar knowledge of this astonishing generation of men than of any other period until, at the earliest, the sixteenth century. The destruction of Catiline and his adherents was the single outstanding achievement, violent and victorious, of one who was fated, for almost the whole of the rest of his life, to be no more than a very irresolute onlooker in politics ; he could never forget it, nor, in consequence, can we. Robert Louis Stevenson was once heard to murmur, " Shall I *never*, then, taste blood ? " Cicero had tasted blood once at least, and he believed that this, and not his inimitable and boundless correspondence, would be his chief claim on the gratitude of posterity.

Of the conspiracy itself not much need be said. The Roman Democratic party, even more than most democratic parties, suffered from an " extremist " left-wing who sought salvation in the overthrow of society. Its leaders were ruined noblemen, and the main plank of their programme was the abolition of all debts. Cicero, the consul, was to be murdered, Rome set on fire, and the rest would follow of itself. Cicero secured efficient spies, and outwitted the conspirators at every turn. Catiline was driven into open rebellion and killed in battle. Four of his chief associates were arrested in Rome, and on the advice of Cato, the most honourable and unbending of Oligarchs, put to death at once by Cicero's orders, illegally and without trial. Whether or not Caesar and Crassus were implicated in the conspiracy at any stage remains a probably insoluble mystery. Associated with Catiline at one time they undoubtedly had been, and the result of the conspiracy was to plunge the whole demo-

cratic party, and the two leaders in particular, back into the depths of discredit. The Equites deserted the Democrats, and allied themselves once more with the Senatorial Oligarchy.

And now at last, in January 61 B.C., Pompey landed in Italy and all Rome was on tip-toe of excitement. Then came the news that he had disbanded his army! It seemed incredible; but it was true. Was it patriotism? Or was it simply pride, the belief that his unarmed prestige would win him all he wanted? Or was it fear, fear of undertaking a Napoleonic part to which he felt himself unequal? Mr. Masefield, in his impressive play "The Tragedy of Pompey the Great," presents his hero as one who was too great to use force, because he knew that the victories won by force are not worth winning. Unfortunately the rest of Pompey's career does not justify this flattering interpretation. Pompey never showed himself loyal to the old republican constitution; he only differed from a Gracchus or a Caesar in his lack of the intellectual courage needed for framing and applying a policy of reconstruction. The German historian, Mommsen, is often unfair to all Caesar's rivals, but his description of Pompey as "tormented by an ambition which was frightened of its own aims" is a verdict which cannot be reversed.

Pompey, then, came unarmed to Rome. The Oligarchy had only to show a reasonable generosity, and his unparalleled prestige was at their service for life. But they were too mean to be other than blind to their own interests. It was their tradition that successful generals were the Senate's natural enemies. Pompey found himself thwarted, insulted, helpless, and threw himself into the arms that were waiting for him, the arms of Caesar. And so was struck the informal bargain between Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, known as the First Triumvirate. Caesar was to be consul in 59 B.C. It would be an epoch-making consulship. During the last few years the Senate had come to realise that a man of the calibre of Caius Gracchus was among them; and this new Gracchus

would be no mere talking tribune, but a consul supported by the greatest soldier and the longest purse in Rome, a Gracchus in alliance with a Scipio and a—but we have to look to modern, not ancient, history, for parallels to such a political millionaire as Crassus.

Caesar's first measure as consul showed democratic statesmanship at its best. It has been truly said that democratic government is impossible without democratic political education. Caesar must have grasped this principle when he instituted the crude Roman equivalent of a popular newspaper. Hitherto the proceedings of the Senate had been, unlike those of the Athenian Council, strictly private. Caesar instituted a daily public placard with a summary of debates and resolutions, to be posted in the forum. He also carried a law against extortion in the provinces, more elaborate and drastic than any hitherto existing; but provincial extortion was a disease too deeply imbedded in the Roman imperial tradition to be countered by an isolated legislative enactment. That problem had to stand over until Caesar was much more than an ordinary annual magistrate. An important part of his programme was filled, like the programme of Caius Gracchus, with legislation in the interests of his allies. Pompey's settlement of his Eastern conquests received the necessary sanction which the Oligarchs had stupidly withheld, and a law was carried to provide agricultural holdings in Italy for Pompey's disbanded soldiers. The Equites also were won back to the Democratic camp by a new and perhaps unduly advantageous contract for the farming of the Asiatic taxes. Most important of all as regarded the future, Caesar secured for himself, in place of one of the ordinary proconsular commands for one year only, a five years military command in Gaul on terms similar to those of Pompey's command against Mithridates.

All these enactments except the first were carried in the face of Senatorial obstruction. Senatorial tribunes were put up to exercise their vetoes and were swept aside. The other

consul, Bibulus, had to be removed by Pompey's soldiers while exercising his undoubtedly legal power of nullifying the actions of his colleague. Bibulus then called to his assistance some of the religious taboos which the extraordinary conservatism of the Romans had preserved. He "watched the heavens" day by day, and discovered on every occasion that the positions of the celestial bodies were unpropitious for the transaction of business. But the Triumvirate refused to be checked by political astronomy.

The only serious misfortune of the year was the failure to conciliate Cicero. Caesar not only admired and liked him, but well knew the value to his cause of an alliance with the brilliant orator, the famous consul who had saved Rome from the brigands of Caesar's own party. But Cicero was not to be won. Whatever Catiline might have failed to do, he had turned Cicero into a conservative. Henceforth, in spite of many misgivings and hesitations, Cicero was, at heart, an Oligarch. Finding his offers rebuffed, Caesar committed what was probably a folly as well as a crime. Fearing the mischief of Cicero's influence during the years of his absence in Gaul, Caesar decided to persecute him. An adventurer named Clodius, one of the most disgusting characters in history and a personal enemy of Cicero's, was commissioned to bring up before the Comitia the fact that Cicero had committed an illegality in executing the Catilinarian conspirators without formal trial. The gold of Crassus backed the venom of Clodius, and Cicero was exiled.

It was a wretched revenge and it failed, as all such persecutions must fail. Before long, feeling grew so strong among the better class of people, that Cicero was recalled with the crown of martyrdom added to his previous trophies. The least defensible aspect of Caesar's career is his choice of associates—Crassus, Catiline, Clodius ; and there is Antony to follow.

(iv) SPAIN AND GAUL (58-50 B.C.)

The conquest of Gaul, the extension of the Roman Empire to the Rhine and the English Channel, is by far the most solid, unquestionable, and enduring of the achievements of Caesar. Indeed it may be said to be, in the light of modern history, the most important of all the achievements of Ancient Rome. Roman Gaul is the main highway from the Ancient to the Modern World. For the Roman Empire in the East was always more Greek than Roman, and in the Dark Ages its civilisation was submerged by the Mohammedan Turks. In Africa Roman civilisation was extinguished by the Vandals and the Arabs. In Spain, again, Arabic influence for a long time predominated, and in England traces of continuous Roman tradition, beneath the barbarism of the early Anglo-Saxons, are faint and uncertain. Only in Gaul, outside Italy, is the tradition quite clearly unbroken, and it was out of the Gallic-Roman civilisation that in the eighth century after Christ, Charlemagne arose, and made real once again, for an unforgettable moment, the Roman ideal of universal Empire—" universal " in that it aimed at the inclusion of all that was then accounted to belong to civilisation. In conquering Gaul, Caesar annexed the province ideally suited, by its climate, its wealth, and its geographical position, to become a new home of Roman life and Roman tradition. Gaul became to Ancient Rome what North America has been to Modern Britain.

We are, then, compelled to ask: Did Caesar understand what he was doing ? Did he realise the unique importance of Gaul to Rome, or was he merely, like Lucullus and Pompey, a great military adventurer on whom chance bestowed a field for action more fruitful than theirs ? It is impossible to answer this question with any certainty. Caesar in this respect resembles Shakespeare. We have the plays of Shakespeare, but the man behind the plays remains, unlike so many poets, a matter of conjecture. And so with Caesar ;

one would gladly sacrifice a hundred or so of Cicero's eight hundred and fifty letters for a half-dozen of intimate letters from Caesar, revealing the secrets of his statesmanship. It is true that Caesar wrote a History of his Gallic Wars, but that History, as will be shown later, does not answer the questions we most want to ask.

This being so, it is natural that historians should differ widely in their estimates of Caesar's attitude towards Gaul. The two extreme standpoints are represented by two of the greatest modern historians. Mommsen, blinded by hero-worship, represents Caesar as gifted throughout his career with a quite superhuman foresight. He writes: "It is more than an error, it is an outrage upon the sacred spirit dominant in history, to regard Gaul solely as the parade-ground on which Caesar exercised himself and his legions for the impending civil war. Though the subjugation of the West was for Caesar so far a means to an end that he laid the foundations of his later height of power in the Transalpine wars, it is the especial privilege of a statesman of genius that his means themselves are ends in their turn. Caesar needed, no doubt, for his party aims a military power, but he did not conquer Gaul as a partisan. There was a direct political necessity for Rome to meet the perpetually threatened invasion of the Germans thus early beyond the Alps, and to construct a rampart which should secure peace to the Roman world. But even this important object was not the highest and ultimate reason for which Gaul was conquered by Caesar. When their old home had become too narrow for the Roman burgesses and they were in danger of decay, the Senate's policy of Italian conquest had saved them from ruin. Now the Italian home had become in its turn too narrow; once more the state languished under the same social evils repeating themselves in a similar fashion on a greater scale. It was a brilliant idea, a grand hope, which led Caesar over the Alps—the idea and the confident expectation that he should gain there for his fellow burgesses a new boundless home,

and regenerate the state a second time by placing it on a broader basis." [1]

Ferrero, on the other hand, takes exactly the opposite view. It is true, he says, that Caesar was a genius, a man whose powers have seldom or never been equalled in history, a great general, a great writer, a great character; but he failed to become a great statesman. He writes: "He went out to his duties in Gaul without any definite ideas of policy, and with the meagrest knowledge of the country and its inhabitants. No doubt he had a clear notion of his general line of conduct. He intended, so far as possible, to apply to Gaul the methods of Lucullus and Pompey in Asia, and to let slip no real or imaginary pretext for military operations, to acquire the riches and reputation so easily picked up in the provinces, to demonstrate to his fellow-countrymen that he was a skilful diplomatist and a brilliant general. But he had as yet no particular ideas as to the possibility of such a policy, nor of the risks and vicissitudes it might be likely to involve. He would make up his mind on the spot, when he was face to face with the situation. His attitude was characteristic of the debasement of Roman statesmanship both at home and abroad. Politics had now become little more than the art of framing happy improvisations. Caesar in Gaul was but following the common law. He went out at his own risk; and he worked for his own ends." [2]

If the reader will ponder over these two passages, so forcible, so confident, coming both of them from great authorities, he will realise that history is not an "exact science"; that, whatever the "facts" may be, the interpretation of facts (which is what alone matters) depends on qualities in the historian that have little scope in laboratory work; it depends half on worldly wisdom or common-sense, and half on a quasi-poetic insight into character. With these conflicting judgments in mind, let us now consider a brief summary of the facts.

[1] Mommsen, *History of Rome*, "Everyman" ed. vol. iv. p. 198.

[2] Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, vol. ii. p. 1.

Before he took up his command in Gaul Caesar had seen but little military service. Like Cromwell, he achieved greatness in military affairs without any regular military apprenticeship until after reaching the age of forty. The only province in which Caesar had served as a provincial official was Spain. He went there after his quaestorship, in 67 B.C., and again, after his praetorship, in 61 B.C. On the first occasion his duties were probably wholly civilian in character, but on the second occasion he undertook two frontier expeditions in the far west, and penetrated to the Atlantic. His successes entitled him to an official "triumph" on his return, but he forewent his right to this empty honour when he found that, on technical legal grounds, it would deprive him of his right to stand for the consulship for the year 59. He also intervened, by the invitation of the inhabitants, to settle some municipal difficulties of the Greek colony of Gades (Cadiz). It was here that he made friends with Balbus, a Spaniard, whom Pompey had rewarded with Roman citizenship. Balbus was, ever after, the most trusted and valuable member of Caesar's political staff.

When we think of Caesar in Spain, it is natural to speculate how far, if at all, his future career in Gaul was inspired by the career of that singular Roman rebel, Sertorius, who had made Spain the scene of his experiments. When the Democratic party was overwhelmed in Rome by Sulla, Sertorius, after many adventures, came to Spain in response to the invitation of the Lusitanians, who were in rebellion (as usual) against Roman rule. He quickly got control of the greater part of the country and proceeded to offer to an indifferent world an almost perfect model of what provincial government should be. His army, which was officered by Romans, was ruled with the strictest discipline, and pillaging became a rare and heavily punished offence. Much more remarkable still, he founded a school in which the children of the Spanish aristocracy were to receive a Greek and Roman education, thus anticipating, in principle, Macaulay's policy of Western

education, inaugurated in India in 1835. It was on these lines alone that the Roman Empire could justify its existence and survive. Sertorius was, like Simon de Montfort, a rebel who taught his conquerors the policy they would find themselves compelled to imitate. Caesar must have talked in Spain with intelligent provincials who remembered the brief Sertorian episode as the brightest page in Spanish history.

Such was Caesar's provincial experience when he set out for Gaul at the beginning of 58 B.C. The situation in Gaul itself was exceedingly threatening. Ever since 118 B.C. Rome had annexed and governed, or rather neglected, the so-called Provincia Transalpina (Province of Gaul beyond the Alps, as distinct from Cisalpine Gaul, the Roman name for what we call Northern Italy). This province comprised the Mediterranean coast from the Alps to the Pyrenees, and a hinterland stretching to Toulouse in the west and not quite as far as Lyons in the north. Beyond this obviously indefensible frontier lay the confusion of Gallic tribes, simple, warlike people already half-civilised and half-corrupted by the peaceful penetration of Roman commerce. The Belgae alone, between the Seine and the Rhine, and the tribes of distant Brittany, were still unspoiled barbarians. Each of the tribes nearer the Province contained a Roman and an anti-Roman party, the latter generally the more popular. The tribes were also, of course, very jealous of one another.[1]

At the moment, however, rivalries were stilled, not by the Roman menace but by what seemed the much more formidable German menace of Ariovistus, the King of the Suevi, from beyond the Rhine. In order to cope the better with this barbarian invasion, it appears that the anti-Roman party in certain tribes had invited the warlike Helvetii (the Gauls of Switzerland) to enter Gaul, and support their fellow countrymen against the Germans. The Roman party, on the other

[1] The Roman position in Gaul at this date in many ways resembles the British position in India in the time of Clive and Warren Hastings.

hand, looked to Rome to defend them against the Helvetii. Ariovistus, also, had seen that the Roman party among the Gauls were playing into his hands, and, by posing as their defender against the Helvetii, had got himself recognised by the Senate as an official " Friend of the Roman People," a fact which illustrates vividly enough the incapacity of the Senate for the conduct of imperial policy. If Caesar had not suddenly broken in on the normal evolution of these events, it is probable that the " Friend of the Roman People " would have been pillaging the Roman Province in a year or two, and that Caesar or Pompey would have been called on to repeat the performance of Marius.

Caesar began by annihilating the Helvetian immigrants, and it has been plausibly suggested that this was a fatal blunder, and conclusive evidence of his ignorance of the real position of affairs.[1] The Helvetii were the comparatively harmless allies of what was, after all, the popular and " nationalist " party in Gaul. Had Caesar understood this, he would have put himself at the head of the coalition of which the Helvetii were members, and conquered Gaul by becoming its deliverer. As it was, the conquest of Ariovistus himself, which Caesar accomplished in the latter part of the same year, could not undo the bad impression already created by the conquest of the Helvetii. The conqueror had stamped himself as a tyrant and an anti-"nationalist."

Such was the work of the first year, 58. In 57 Caesar conquered the warlike Belgae in a series of battles extending roughly from the Aisne to Maubeuge on the modern Belgian frontier, and at the end of the campaign he proclaimed the annexation of the whole of Gaul to the Roman Empire. Had this been from the first his goal ? Probably ; but it is likely that at the moment the proclamation was largely a political manoeuvre dictated by the position at Rome. The Triumvirate was collapsing under the weight of the incompetence

[1] This is argued extremely interestingly, and to me convincingly, in Ferrero, vol. ii.

and quarrelsomeness of its two senior members. Cicero had returned from his exile, the martyr-hero of the hour, and had entered on a vigorous political campaign against the Triumvirs. It was absolutely necessary for Caesar to reconstruct the situation in Rome if he wanted to carry out his Gallic task unmolested, and for such a purpose the prestige of conqueror was what he needed.

In the spring of 56 Caesar met his two colleagues and two hundred senators at Lucca, at the extreme south of his Cisalpine Province, on the border of Ancient "Italy," 200 miles from Rome. Nearer to Rome he could not come without breaking the law and becoming a rebel. At Lucca the alliance was re-knit. Pompey and Crassus were to be consuls in 55, after which Crassus was to have a five years' command against the Parthians, and Pompey a five years' command in Spain, which, by an extraordinary innovation, he was to be allowed to administer from Rome itself. Caesar's command was extended from five to ten years, thus terminating at the end of 49. Cicero was to be either conciliated or bullied into transferring his valuable talents to the service of the Triumvirs, a task which proved unexpectedly easy. This done, Caesar could safely leave the affairs of Rome to themselves until he had settled with the affairs of Gaul, and turned his paper annexation into a political and military fact.

The outline of the remaining campaigns is as follows: In 56, Caesar conquered the Veneti of Brittany, with the aid of a fleet built on the Loire and commanded by Decimus Brutus, afterwards one of Caesar's assassins. In 55 he built his famous bridge across the Rhine and reconnoitred the German country beyond it; he also made a very brief expedition to Britain. In 54 occurred the second and longer expedition to Britain, during which a formidable rebellion broke out among the Belgae. 53 was occupied with the suppression of the Belgae and a second expedition into Germany. In 52 a very formidable and well-nigh universal rebellion broke out under the leadership of Vercingetorix, the one real hero

of the Gallic struggle for independence. The suppression of this rebellion marked the completion of the conquest, and the years 51 and 50 were occupied with final measures of pacification and settlement, and the development of the situation in Rome which produced the Civil War.

During the latter years of the Gallic War, Caesar treated his beaten enemies with a severity that was often appalling brutality. Prisoners were massacred in cold blood ; a rebel chieftain was flogged to death in front of the Roman legions. After the news of a massacre of the Germans had reached Rome, Cato, the most inveterate and also the most honourable of Caesar's enemies, proposed in the Senate that he should be handed over to the Germans as a reparation for the crime committed against them. Imperialistic policy has almost always been stained with military crimes, and it has generally been able to find a justification, which will convince those who believe that Imperialism is fundamentally justified as the only possible method of spreading civilisation. The case of Cato against Caesar is like the case of Burke against Warren Hastings. In both cases the evidence for the prosecution is somewhat damaged by the fact that the accusers were notoriously actuated not only by motives of humanity (as they genuinely were, in both cases), but also by motives of bitter political partisanship. For us, judging from a distance, it is easy to see much that can be said on both sides. If we grant that Roman rule was ultimately a priceless boon to Gaul and the world, and British rule to India, we must also grant that the men entrusted with enforcing that rule must in the main be the judges of how their very arduous and dangerous task is to be carried out. At the same time, we must also grant that such men are subjected to very severe temptations towards gratuitous cruelty, and that they often yield to those temptations. No writer illustrates this dilemma more forcibly than the Roman historian, Tacitus, in his account of Agricola, who, a hundred and twenty years later, carried out in Britain the task Caesar

carried out in Gaul. Tacitus expresses most vividly the horrors of the brutal conquest, the pathos of the extinction of tribal freedom, and the grandeur of the Roman Imperial mission, without any attempt to reconcile his diverse emotions in a consistent historical philosophy.

The expeditions to Britain have a special interest for us, but their importance was small and their results probably *nil*. Caesar's real intentions are uncertain. Possibly curiosity and the spirit of adventure were among his motives. It has been plausibly suggested that he hoped, through these expeditions, to offer an outlet for the military ardours of the conquered Gallic chieftains, whom Roman conquest would deprive of their habitual occupation. Probably his main motive was political advertisement. All military leaders are more or less consciously aware that, in so far as they are dependent on civilian support at home, they must buy that support by producing results which the civilian will regard as " victories " and " triumphs." In most of the great wars of history can be found military exploits calculated to " feed the Press " rather than to beat the enemy, and Caesar's expeditions to Britain may perhaps be numbered among such.

The final victory over Vercingetorix was one of the most extraordinary events in military history. Vercingetorix withdrew his forces (about 80,000) to Alesia, a well-nigh impregnable hill, so situated that lines no less than ten miles long would be necessary for its investment. Caesar proceeded to dig himself in, with about 60,000 men, on the ten mile front, and he prepared to starve the enemy out. Meanwhile the allies of Vercingetorix gathered a vast army of 250,000 and marched on Alesia. Caesar's men now had to take to their spades again, make a fresh entrenchment on their outer circumference and prepare to stand a siege themselves. Had the new Gallic army acted with the cold-blooded prudence of scientific soldiers, they would have contented themselves with besieging the besiegers, and, even though every man in

the army of Vercingetorix, as well as every man in the army of Caesar, had been starved to death, Gaul would have been delivered. But such plans were not within the scope of Gallic warfare. They elected to fight a pitched battle, and were defeated. Caesar was saved, and Alesia doomed. This, even more than the later victory over Pompey, must be taken as the decisive moment, not only in Caesar's career, but in the history of Rome. In the previous year (53 B.C.) Crassus and his army had been destroyed by the Parthians. An equal disaster in Gaul, following the catastrophe in the East, might well have destroyed Roman Imperialism, as surely as it would have terminated the career of Caesar. As it was, the battle of Alesia is the birthday of civilised " France."

What little we know of Caesar's organisation of his conquest may be considered, in the next section, along with Caesar's policy towards the provinces in general, after Civil War had made him absolute master of the Roman world. From the military point of view, the conquest was final; seventy years of peace followed in Gaul.

It was during the few months following the fall of Alesia that Caesar wrote his famous *Commentaries* on his Gallic War. The book has always been praised as a perfect model of the purest Latin prose style, lucid and unadorned. We are more concerned to note its political purpose. Pompey was by this time drifting into alliance with the Senate, and a new crisis, more formidable than that which he had met five years before at Lucca, was confronting Caesar. In view of this crisis, the *Commentaries* were written as an appeal to intelligent, but of course non-expert, opinion in Italy. The military history is popular, not scientific, in general character. The horrors of the war are softened, the victories heightened, the mistakes concealed. The commander is represented, not as an imperialist adventurer, but as a governor whose good intentions towards the natives were thwarted by their base ingratitude and provocation; as one who had the work of conquest thrust upon him by

circumstances beyond his own control. Yet it is all done so skilfully, so subtly, with such a complete absence of egoism, that the reader feels that he is being guided throughout by the judgment of an impartial and extraordinarily intelligent spectator of the events recorded. Again and again critics, in all ages, have said that they can discover no trace of partisanship or propaganda, nothing indeed but a scientific zest for the record of facts, in Caesar's *Commentaries*. This shows, not that the *Commentaries* are not propaganda, but that they are good propaganda.

(v) THE FAR SIDE OF THE RUBICON (49-44 B.C.)

During Caesar's last two years of active warfare in Gaul (53, 52 B.C.) the Triumvirate was falling to pieces. Crassus was killed in Parthia ; Pompey went over to the Oligarchs. The causes which had made Pompey a kind of sleeping partner in Caesar's undertakings had been from the first mainly accidental. Perhaps the strongest tie between them had been not political but personal. Pompey had married Caesar's daughter, Julia, and had loved her deeply ; but Julia died in the same year as Crassus. By nature Pompey was a Conservative. It is not, perhaps, fair to say, with John Stuart Mill, that the Conservatives are " naturally the stupid party," but it surely can be said with entire fairness that those to whom the gods have given worldly fortune and denied high intelligence will always gravitate to the conservative side. The existing order has suited them excellently, so why alter it ? Mere selfish jealousy of the man whose military triumphs were casting his own into the shade combined, in Pompey's mind, with a more or less disinterested dread of Caesar's radical and adventurous intelligence. Moreover, Pompey's position in Rome, from the Lucca conference onwards, would have proved irksome even to a less clumsy politician then he. Being neither a Dictator armed with supreme authority nor a private citizen free

from responsibility, he looked on helplessly while bands of hooligans, led by Caesarian and anti-Caesarian demagogues, insulted the Senate and himself with equal impunity and impartiality. At last the Senate threw itself at his feet and begged his patronage and protection. So the new grouping of forces came about.

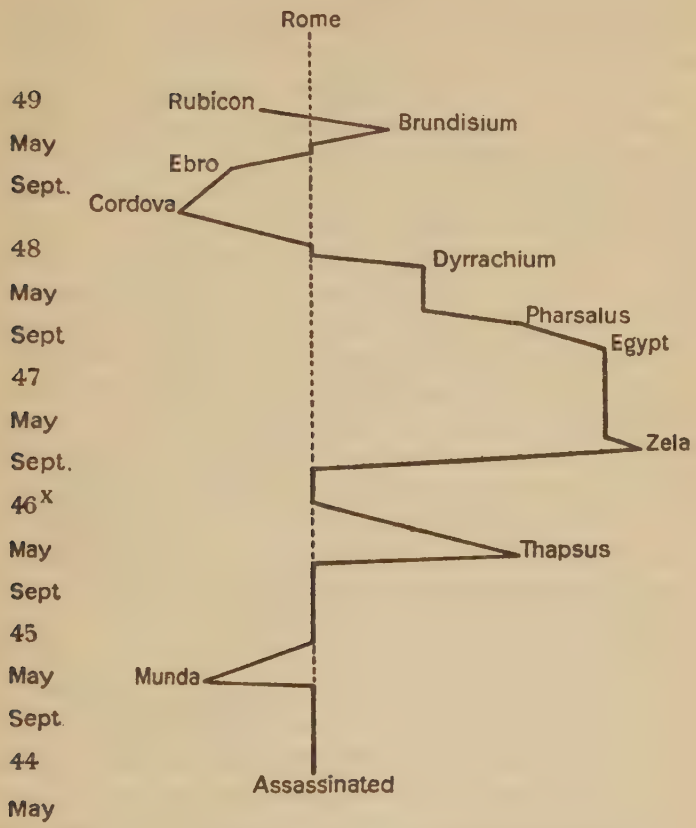
It now only remained to pick a quarrel with Caesar and destroy him. The pretext for the quarrel was found in the technicalities of the Roman constitution. That constitution, as has been noticed, was specially devised to limit the power of executive officials. Two general principles underlay all its rules on this subject: first, that officials during their term of office (normally one year in Rome as consul or praetor, followed by one year abroad as pro-consul or pro-praetor) were inviolable; second, that between any two terms of office a period of time must intervene, during which the official became a private citizen subject to prosecution. This latter principle was secured by the provision that no one could stand as a candidate for office except as a private citizen. Caesar, however, knew that any such interval in his own case would be used by his enemies for his destruction. He was determined to continue his Gallic command to its legal limit, the end of 49 B.C., and also to be consul in 48 B.C. This his enemies succeeded in preventing. Throughout the long wrangle, which filled the year 50 B.C., Caesar, through his agent, Curio, conducted his case with great skill, and many technical points were scored by both sides. All this is unimportant. Beneath the debate on constitutional curiosities lay the issue, "my head or thy head." At the beginning of the year 49 (January 7th) the Senate declared war on Caesar by carrying the famous old resolution proclaiming a state of war within the republic.[1] As soon as the news reached him, Caesar, who was watching the situation from just outside the Italian frontier, crossed the river Rubicon into Italy with the only legion he had with him. The Civil War was begun.

[1] Videant consules ne quid detrimenti respublica capiat.

It has often been debated whether this war is to be regarded as a war between rival adventurers, Caesar and Pompey, or as a war between a revolutionary general and his government, between Caesar and the Senate. In truth it was neither. Pompey was in the main a reluctant party to the quarrel, and the Senatorial majority was only too ready on every occasion to vote whatever measures seemed most likely to preserve peace at any price. The real antagonist of Caesar was the small clique of convinced, courageous, and implacable Oligarchs, a minority of Senatorial " Die-Hards," who coerced or cajoled both Pompey and the sheepish majority of their own colleagues. Their leader was Cato.

Cato was one of those superb fools whom only a partisan or a vulgarian will refuse to respect. He was the only one of Caesar's rivals and contemporaries who deserves the name of statesman, if statesmanship implies political principle. He was an incredibly bad statesman and a very honest man. He has been called " the last of the Romans," and the phrase is correct on the assumption that " Rome " means the old, sturdy, primitive, agricultural city-state, which had ended its existence some time previous to the Punic Wars. Cato acted consistently on the principle that the politics of the fourth century B.C. would solve the problems of the first century. In the fourth century, he thought perhaps, he would have been at home. Yet even there, doubtless, he would have found " lost causes, forsaken beliefs, and impossible loyalties " to which to dedicate his instinct for martyrdom. As Cicero said, " he makes his proposals as if he were speaking in Plato's Republic instead of in Romulus' gutter." Cato was a Utopian idealist. His career is the genuine tragedy of an utterly unadaptable man, born in the wrong period, and predestined by his noble birth to the wrong career. Had he been born in the thirteenth century A.D. he might have been happy as an austere Dominican friar. Caesar honoured Cato alone of his contemporaries by bitterly hating him, and Cato deserved the honour.

Diagram of Caesar's movements during the last period of his career.



X The year 46 had eighty additional days in order to rectify the calendar.

It is part of the plan of this book to reduce military detail to the minimum ; and it will be convenient here to give a bare chronological summary of the remaining five and a quarter years of Caesar's life, from the crossing of the Rubicon to the assassination.

In January, 49, Caesar crossed the Rubicon ; the Oligarchs were utterly unprepared, and evacuated Rome, intending to cross to Macedonia and re-establish the legal centre of authority there. Caesar marched to Brundusium, arriving March 9th, but was unable to prevent Pompey and his followers from crossing the Adriatic. He returned to Rome and established a provisional government ; thence, after a very few days, to Spain, where he defeated the best of Pompey's armies on the Ebro (June) ; on again to the south of Spain, Cordova, whose Pompeian governor submitted without a battle ; back to Rome again by the end of the year.

After eleven days in Rome, Caesar crossed the Adriatic from Brundusium, landing near Dyrrachium (Durazzo), where Pompey's army was encamped (January, 48). After a prolonged attempt to force a battle here, Caesar was defeated and withdrew south-east ; Pompey followed and was utterly defeated at Pharsalus in Thessaly (August). Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt, and, arriving in October, found that his enemy had already been assassinated. Caesar remained in Egypt till June, 47 B.C. Then, after a very brief campaign against the rebel King of Pontus, ending in the victory of Zela, he was back in Rome by September, 47.

In December, 47, Caesar moved to Sicily and crossed to Africa, where he defeated the Pompeian armies and their ally, Juba, King of Numidia, at Thapsus, and captured Utica, where Cato committed suicide ; and returned to Rome in June, 46. After seven months in Rome, he set off in January, 45, for a last campaign in Spain, defeating the last army of the Pompeians at Munda in the south of Spain. He was back at Rome in May. Ten months later he was assassinated. Had he not been assassinated he would have

set forth in a week or so on the greatest of all his military undertakings, the conquest of Parthia.

Such a survey leaves, perhaps, three impressions on the mind. The first is the well-nigh incredible military activity ; an achievement perhaps unequalled, certainly unsurpassed, by either Alexander or Napoleon. The second is the shortness of the time available for the real work of statesmanship, the reconstruction of the Roman world. Caesar was in Rome only about twenty months all told ; and though we may allow that it was possible to devote thought to the problems of reconstruction during military campaigns, it is also obvious that much of his energies, while in Rome, must have been occupied with military preparations. The third impression takes the form of a question : why, in the midst of this enormous activity, did Caesar spend no less than nine months in Egypt ?

It may be that this Egyptian interlude was the worst error and misfortune of Caesar's career. Had he returned to Rome at once, with the immense prestige of Pharsalus undimmed, it may be that his genius, assisted by the unprecedented clemency he had hitherto shown to all his captured Roman enemies, might have enabled him to grapple triumphantly with the problem of reconstruction.[1] But Egypt was rich and weak, and owed Rome a large sum of money. So Caesar went to Egypt with a few thousand soldiers, for financial reasons, and there he met Cleopatra.

Cleopatra and her brother, the last of the long line of the Ptolemies, the Greek dynasty that secured Egypt on the break-up of Alexander's empire, were rival claimants for the

[1] There is nothing unnatural or inconsistent in the contrast between Caesar's severity to the Gauls and his clemency to his Roman enemies. His aim in the first case was to subdue and in the second to conciliate. One may compare the humanity of the English Cavaliers and Roundheads towards one another with the atrocious cruelty of the latter to the Irish. However, in the later campaigns of the civil war, Caesar was forced to abandon his clemency towards his prisoners. It had failed to produce the effect intended, and his soldiers were tired of fighting the same enemies again and again.

Egyptian throne. Each sought Caesar's alliance against the other; but Cleopatra's arts were those in which no brother could compete with her. In both senses of the word, she made herself Caesar's mistress. In revenge, the rival party brought up their forces, and for four months Caesar and Cleopatra were besieged in the palace of Alexandria. Thus was invaluable time wasted; for four crucial months Caesar was lost to the world, and even after a relieving force had raised the siege, three more months were spent in a most ill-timed holiday. But more was lost than mere time. The precise nature of Cleopatra's schemes is obscure, but there can be little doubt that she aimed at a royal match with her victim, whereby the houses of Julius and of Ptolemy would reign as Emperor and Empress over the Roman world. How far Caesar was drawn into the scheme we cannot tell, but it is fairly certain that he was not wholly indifferent or hostile to it, and that it coloured his later policy towards Roman institutions with more than a touch of Oriental Sultanism. In fact, Cleopatra visited Rome as his guest in 46, and again in 45 B.C. This was what Rome could not forgive; this more than anything else sharpened the daggers of the conspirators. Cleopatra is generally credited with the ruin of Antony; and here perhaps there was not very much to ruin. What was very much more important was her influence on Antony's master.[1]

The result of Caesar's military triumph was to place him in the position occupied by Cromwell in 1653. The constitution lay in ruins around him. Arms had left nothing

[1] The theory, popularised by Bernard Shaw's play *Caesar and Cleopatra*, that the relations of the most remarkable man and the most remarkable woman of the age were morally "innocent" and politically unimportant, simply will not bear inspection. Mr. Shaw, it will be remembered, represents the relations of Caesar and Cleopatra as those of a kindly philosophic "uncle" amused by a charming but petulant "niece." At the same time, the play is not only a most brilliant comedy, but it does also convey a real sense of some aspects of Caesar's greatness both of intellect and character. And this is a fine achievement; for it is rarely indeed that works of historical fiction succeed in presenting the greatness of a great historical character.

standing but the Man. But the Man is mortal, and unless he can rebuild where he has thrown down, he dies with a sense of failure, and leaves a legacy of anarchy. Did Caesar succeed or fail in his last crucial task ? Once again we are beset with contradictory judgments from the greatest modern historians. Mommsen finds that Caesar completed in all essentials his task of reconstruction, and that nothing remained for Augustus but to put together again, with inferior skill, the constitutional mechanism temporarily dislocated by the criminal folly of the conspirators. Ferrero, on the other hand, holds that Caesar was primarily a great destroyer, that the time had not yet come when permanent reconstruction was possible, and that, even if it had come, Caesar's despotic radicalism was ill-fitted for a task in which success depended above all on patience, tact, and respect for conservative prejudices. And this latter view seems to be nearer the truth.

On an earlier page (40), the problems confronting Caesar were analysed under three headings, constitutional, social and economic, and imperial. We may here consider what contribution Caesar made to the solution of each of these in his brief spell of absolute power.

The constitutional problem was the problem of finding a substitute for Senatorial oligarchy. Here Caesar could do no more than offer himself. Unlike Marius and Sulla and Pompey, he accepted the fact that Dictatorship was no longer an emergency remedy for temporary evils. It must become a permanent office. Caesar accepted Dictatorship for life, and, by placing his image on the coins and his statue among those of the seven legendary Kings of Rome, he clearly indicated that the wheel had come full circle, and that the bridge which Horatius had held against Tarquin of old must now be thrown open to Tarquin's greater successor. It is probable that he already had his eye on his nephew (and adopted son), Caius Octavius, as his successor.

The social and economic problem was the complication of mortal diseases that had faced the Gracchi nearly a century before; the slums of Rome, the disappearance of the free cultivator in the country districts, the concentration of wealth in the hands of capitalistic swindlers, and landlords working vast estates with gang-slavery. Of all the remedies of Caius Gracchus only the most dubious had survived, the bread subsidy in the capital, which had, thanks to Clodius, now become a distribution of bread without any payment whatever. Caesar could do little, but what he could do he did. He halved the number of recipients of free bread; he also revived Gracchus' scheme for the refounding of Corinth and Carthage, and the organisation of emigration to these and other sites. He also enacted that landlords must employ one freeman for every two slaves on their estates, but it is doubtful if this law was ever enforced.

It is in relation to imperial problems that Caesar's statesmanship is most apparent. Hitherto the Empire had been organised, if such a chaos deserves the name of organisation, on a basis of pillage—pillage of the provinces for the benefit of the city of Rome and its aristocracy. For the rule of a city Caesar substituted the rule of a man. Provincial governors were henceforth responsible to the Dictator alone, and the responsibility was a real one. The law against extortion passed in Caesar's consulship was at last enforced. We are at last on the way to the orderly provincial system to which the narrative of St. Paul's travels in " The Acts of the Apostles " is such a striking witness. Further, the bad old system whereby the taxation of the province of Asia was leased to tax farmers, was either abolished or reformed. The new province of Gaul was allowed to raise by its own methods the strictly moderate lump sum annually demanded of it. Again, Roman citizenship was extended among provincials far more widely than before, and this in itself afforded the provinces protection against their governors. Whole cities were enfranchised, such as Gades, the home of the faithful Balbus.

Lastly Caesar affords one of the most striking examples in history of the applications of scientific intelligence to political problems. He arranged for the reform of the Calendar, the need for which is shown by the fact that eighty extra days were added to the year 46, in order to rectify the long accumulation of error. He projected an economic census of the whole Empire, a kind of Domesday Book. He projected the first codification of the Roman law. He projected the creation of a complete and exhaustive Roman imperial library. And in the midst of these enormous pre-occupations he found time to regulate the traffic of the Roman streets and revise the municipal institutions of Naples. When we review the whole, we are inclined to echo Shakespeare's Mark Antony :

" Here was a Caesar ! When comes such another ? "

Thus he worked and planned in the last months of his life, but over the work and the worker two spectres cast shadows, two terrors steeled against him the hearts of Rome. There was the old traditional terror of Tarquin, and the new and very urgent terror of Cleopatra. Caesar stood supreme, but he stood alone. He was much more than a party leader ; but also much less, for he had no party. The conspiracy was hatched among those whom he believed to be his closest adherents.

This most famous of all political assassinations has been diversely viewed by different interpreters. Dante places Brutus and Cassius on either side of Judas Iscariot, in the lowest pit of Hell. Shakespeare, taking over from Plutarch the tradition of sentimental republicanism, makes the conspiracy, at any rate so far as Brutus was concerned, a noble though futile enterprise. Most modern historians deny the nobility and emphasise the futility of the deed. Mr. Warde Fowler writes : [1] " It is the most brutal and the most pathetic scene that profane history has to record. It was, as Goethe

[1] *Julius Caesar*, p. 377.

has said, the most senseless deed that ever was done. It was wholly useless, for it did not, and could not, save Rome from monarchy. . . . It plunged the Empire into another long period of civil war. . . . All this ruin was caused by a handful of men, who, pursuing a phantom of liberty and following the lead of a personal hatred, slew the one man who saw the truth of things."

With all that this writer says of the brutality and the pathos of that famous scene we can agree. The treachery of the conspirators is odious in every detail. They were not open enemies ; they made use of their privileged position as Caesar's fellow-workers to lure him to his doom ; and most of them were probably actuated by the meanest motives. Yet that is not all. Their action was neither wholly senseless nor wholly useless. All the evidence points to the fact that Caesar, blinded like Napoleon by his own genius, was claiming to defy tradition and to ignore the nature of the political material with which he had to deal ; to impose a semi-oriental sultanate upon an empire that was Western much more than it was Oriental. How real such a menace was the subsequent career of Antony bears witness. It was against this that the conspirators drew their swords, and drew them not in vain. To regard Augustus as merely the heir and imitator of Caesar is to miss the whole point of this crisis of Roman history. Had Brutus been able to compare the Roman Empire of Augustus with the Roman Empire apparently projected by Caesar, he might well have claimed that the difference justified the conspiracy.

(vi) THE HEIRS OF CAESAR : ANTONY AND AUGUSTUS

Julius Caesar was the last and greatest of a series of statesmen and soldiers who between them achieved the ruin of the old, unworkable republican constitution, each of them improvising, with some brilliance and much violence, some-

thing new to take its place. But all these improvisations, from that of Gracchus to that of Caesar, lacked the elements of permanence. To complete the story and make it fully intelligible, it is necessary to give some idea of the statesmanship of the man whose lot it was to provide a permanent structure.

Caesar's chosen heir and adopted son, Octavian,[1] was a very different man from his uncle, and the difference is symbolised by the contrast between their careers. "Some achieve greatness; some have greatness thrust upon them." Julius Caesar belonged to the first class; Octavian, in large measure, to the second. Had he not been Caesar's heir, it is doubtful if he would have played any considerable part in history. None the less, since the greatness was thrust upon him, he resolutely shouldered the burden, outwitted rivals who were very ready to relieve him of it, and showed himself better able to bear it than any of his contemporaries would have been. It took Julius Caesar forty-two years to win a first-class position in the Roman world; after that achievement (the formation of the First Triumvirate in 60 B.C.), his career is a continuous crescendo of storm and stress to the final catastrophe. Octavian, on the other hand, found himself, by the mere fact of adoption, well-nigh the most important person in Rome at the age of nineteen; then followed thirteen years of intrigue and violence, culminating in the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. By the age of thirty-two, an age at which Julius Caesar was still a nobody, or at least a mere "somebody," he had attained the summit of his career. The ship of his destiny now moved onward into calmer and ever calmer waters; there follows the long "reign" of forty-five years, during which the new structure of empire achieved stability with the aid of time and the growth of habit. Julius Caesar was, to the

[1] By birth, Caius Octavius: on accepting adoption in accordance with Julius Caesar's will he became Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian); the honorific title of Augustus was conferred by the Senate in 27 B.C.

day of his death, an adventurer ; Augustus, long before his death, had become something much less like Napoleon and much more like Queen Victoria.

But at the moment of Caesar's assassination, Octavian was away from Rome, wholly unknown to the public, and no one gave him a moment's thought. Another " heir " of Caesar, a very different man, was on the spot. Though Octavian was the legal heir, yet the heirs of adventurers and usurpers have not the same rights as the heirs of legitimate kings, and Octavian might well have turned out to be no more than a Richard Cromwell. The political heir was Mark Antony, the closest and ablest of Caesar's adherents in his later years. Antony was a perfect example of the type thrown up by periods of revolution and civil war, a man without morals, principles, or prudence, but forcible and adroit, and a good soldier. He got possession of Caesar's will, and with that remarkable document succeeded in blasting the prospects of the Liberators, as the conspirators called themselves, and the Senatorial party, now once more led by Cicero. Caesar, like Cecil Rhodes, recovered by means of his will much of the popularity that he had lost in the last years of his life. By the will, Caesar bequeathed his vast gardens beyond the Tiber, with the artistic collections they contained, to be a public park, and ordered that from his enormous fortune a small sum, a kind of " tip," should be paid to every Roman citizen. Suddenly, behind the façade of his unpopularity with the upper classes, there emerged, as a political factor, the hero-worship of the mob. Shakespeare has given us, in one of his best known scenes, a picture of the sudden revulsion of popular feeling, and has credited to Antony a speech of pathetic eloquence, in which the will serves only as a climax. But Antony was no great orator, and it is probable that the dead man's will and not the living man's speech was the effective instrument. A few weeks later Brutus and Cassius left Rome in despair.

It is not possible to follow here the complicated intrigues of the next few years. Antony was for the moment master of the situation, but he had, like Caesar in 49 B.C., many enemies to cope with—Decimus Brutus in Cisalpine Gaul, Brutus and Cassius in the East, and the oratorical offensive of Cicero, with his fourteen "Philippic"[1] orations. And then Octavian arrived, prepared to sell the glamour of his name to the highest bidder. Antony at first despised Octavian, but he ultimately found it necessary to take him into partnership, if he was to cope with the rest. No doubt he expected the junior partner to prove harmless and docile. Thus came about the so-called Second Triumvirate, Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus, the last-named being an important person only because he happened to be in command of some efficient legions. The oligarchical party in Rome was destroyed by Sulla's method of wholesale political assassination, Cicero being among the victims, and Brutus and Cassius were defeated at Philippi (42 B.C.). It was then arranged that the Triumvirs should divide the Roman world between them, Antony taking the East, Octavian the West, and Lepidus Africa.

Antony's choice of the East reveals him as the true inheritor of Caesar's policy. Caesar had believed that a vast achievement in the East was necessary to the establishment of the prestige of the new monarchy, and at the very moment of his assassination he was about to start for the conquest of Parthia. Antony was taking up Caesar's plans at the point where death had interrupted them. Estimated in immediate cash values, which is for most people in all ages the obvious criterion, the East was worth far more than the West, Asia worth far more than Europe. Rome seemed no longer, after the conquests of Lucullus and Pompey, the true centre of the Empire. In establishing himself at Alexandria Antony was, after all, only anticipating, by three-and-a-half centuries,

[1] The name was borrowed from the "Philippics" of Demosthenes, the Athenian orator, against Philip of Macedon.

the policy of Constantine, when he moved his capital to the shores of the Bosphorus. Egyptian wealth and civilisation had a past behind it reckoned in thousands of years, and even Greek Alexandria had been the centre of scientific and literary culture when Rome was scarcely advanced beyond a vigorous barbarism.

So Antony established himself in Alexandria, and prepared for the Parthian War. The great campaign was undertaken in 36 B.C. and ended in failure, though Antony's skill avoided the fate of Crassus. Meanwhile, however, Antony was succumbing to the lure of the East in its more enervating forms. It is very difficult to say how far the " romance " of Antony and Cleopatra represents historical fact. It may be there was as genuine a love affair between Antony and Cleopatra as between Romeo and Juliet, but purely political motives might well have accounted for all that happened. Cleopatra might find in marriage with the ruler of the Roman Empire the one means of preserving her kingdom and her dynasty from obliteration ; and Antony might delude himself into thinking that it was possible to combine the rôles of an oriental sultan and a Roman " dictator," securing by means of the first position the right to make the second hereditary in his family. He was already married to Octavian's sister, Octavia, and a marriage was the symbol of the endurance of the Triumvirate. Now, without divorcing Octavia, he claimed the oriental privilege of polygamy, and celebrated marriage with Cleopatra shortly before starting for Parthia. What had been feared as a tendency in Caesar was revealed as a fact in Antony, and Roman sentiment was outraged. The climax came in 34 B.C. when Antony publicly allotted various Roman provinces as " kingdoms " to his children by Cleopatra, and to Caesarion, the reputed son of Cleopatra and Julius Caesar. Octavian denounced these arrangements before the Roman Senate, and war became inevitable.

Long before the final victory of the West at Actium in 31 B.C. it was apparent that Antony's ambitions were wrecked

upon an inward contradiction. His Roman supporters desired above all things that their master should return to Rome, and were more anxious to destroy the influence of Cleopatra than to defeat Octavian. Cleopatra dreaded above all things the return to Rome, and feared victory itself as the prelude to her own ruin. Her aim was the separation of the Eastern provinces from Rome. The battle itself witnessed the disruption of the forces of Antony rather than the victory of Octavian, for Antony and Cleopatra sailed away towards Egypt in the middle of the battle, leaving their Roman supporters to their fate. In the next year Octavian conquered Egypt, Antony and Cleopatra committing suicide on the brink of ruin, as Brutus and Cassius had done at Philippi twelve years before.

The position in Rome on the return of Octavian was a very curious one. The long cycle of civil wars, people might well believe, was over. Rome was delivered from the most dreaded enemy she had known since Hannibal. Caesarism, as represented by Antony, was crushed. The forces of conservatism had triumphed. The tide of sentiment set strongly in favour of a revival of the old aristocracy, the old religious rites, and the old puritanism of Roman morals. The great literary monuments of the early Augustan age, the *Aeneid* of Virgil, the *Odes* of Horace, the *History* of Livy, are full of this sentimental conservatism. Yet if one of Caesar's heirs had been defeated, the other had been his conqueror. How did Octavian himself fit into such a scheme of things ?

Had Octavian been a great adventurer of the Napoleonic type, like his uncle, he would not have fitted into such a scheme at all. But in truth he was a very different kind of man. Destiny had cast him into the political maelstrom at the age of an undergraduate of to-day, and he had displayed remarkable adroitness and, when it served him, remarkable ruthlessness, but he had long sickened of such a career. As victor of Actium he enjoyed all the glory and all the power

that the world can confer on its favourites. The poets were already placing him among the gods. Weak health, the fatigue of overstrained nerves, and an intense prudence combined to incline him towards an abdication after the style of Sulla, rather than towards the dangerous despotism of his uncle. He expressed a wish to retire into private life, and there is no reason to suppose the expression was hypocritical. Yet it could not be. The fashionable conservatism could extol the glories of the Senate, but it could not make the Senators attend to their political duties. It could rebuild the temples, but it could not recreate the old religion. It could clamour for a rigid enforcement of new legislation on the subject of marriage and family life, but it could not obey the very laws whose enforcement it demanded. "We can endure neither our vices nor the remedies for them," wrote the historian Livy.

Thus a Caesar was inevitable. Julius Caesar had failed to win acceptance because, seeing the necessity of a despot, he thrust his despotism upon a community which did not yet see what he saw. Augustus won universal acceptance because the parts were now reversed. The community secretly craved a despot, and Augustus was perfectly fitted to the part, because his own indifference to glory, his unmistakeable weariness under the load of power thrust upon him, made his despotism the less galling. Julius Caesar hewed his way to the throne; Augustus was elevated to it by a force like that which impels matter to fill up a vacuum.

It is unnecessary here to analyse the curiously tentative steps by which supreme authority was accumulated in the hands of Augustus. The Senate continued to perform its functions, and in name Octavian was no more than Augustus ("My Lord") and Princeps ("first citizen" or "President"), with the political powers of a tribune and the military powers of a pro-consul. The title of Dictator with its odious past was carefully avoided. Similarly, in modern England, the Prime Minister is in name no more than the "first

servant " of the King. But it is the servant who rules and not the master. The Roman Senate tacitly accepted the position that the Monarchy has accepted in England, the position of dignity without power.

Such an achievement as that of Augustus needed not force nor brilliance, but prudence, and, above all, time. The prudence Augustus could supply, and Fortune gave him time. At his return from Egypt he was thirty-three. He lived to the age of seventy-seven. During the last ten years of his life he was past serious work, and delegated most of his duties to Tiberius, who was not only his stepson and heir but also much the ablest statesman in Rome. Thus even the dotage of Augustus contributed to the confirmation of his work; for the delegation of duties, the " regency," which that dotage involved, helped to establish two principles necessary to a permanent and stable monarchy: the distinction between occupancy of the " throne " and personal activity in government; and the custom of hereditary succession.

III

CHARLES THE GREAT (742-814).

(i) THE SURVIVAL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

When we leap the eight hundred years[1] that lie between Augustus and Charles, or Charlemagne (Carolus Magnus), King of the Franks, we pass from one Roman Emperor to another. But Charles is "Roman" and "Emperor" with a difference. Whether or not it is correct to call Augustus Emperor, he was certainly a Roman of the Romans; Charles, on the other hand, was certainly an Emperor, and he was crowned in Rome, yet he was never a Roman, and it was on the Rhine, not the Tiber, that the real centre of his empire lay. Nothing illustrates more forcibly both the obstinate conservatism of the human mind and also the amazing successfulness of Julius Caesar and Augustus, than the history of the survival of the Roman Empire, first as an institution and afterwards as an idea. The history of that survival will be sketched, however slightly, in the course of this essay.

The life of Charles falls eight and a half centuries nearer to our own time than the life of Julius Caesar. But the society in which he lived seems much more remote. We have stepped forward from civilisation into semi-barbarism. Julius Caesar was the author of one of the minor classics of literature; Charles was never taught to write, and, though

[1] Charles succeeded his father Pepin as king of the Franks in 768, eight hundred years all but one after the battle of Actium; he died exactly eight hundred years after the death of Augustus, in 814.

he tried, he failed to acquire the art amidst the distractions of statesmanship. Cicero's letters are exactly such as might be written by an exceptionally talented letter writer to-day ; but the letters that have come down to us from personages, mostly ecclesiastical, contemporary with Charles, are as strange, judged by modern standards, as the effusions of Jane Austen's " Mr. Collins." The portrait busts of Julius Caesar might easily be passed off as the busts of a distinguished modern statesman ; but the contemporary mosaic at the Lateran, representing Charles the Great and Pope Leo III. receiving gifts from St. Peter, strikes one as would the work of a gifted child. Charles and his contemporaries were Christians, but even their religion, though it bears the same name as ours, is more remote from us than the religion of the educated Roman of the first century. The cultivated agnosticism of Caesar or Cicero differs in vocabulary but hardly in essentials from the cultivated agnosticism of many of our more important public men, but there is no bishop alive to-day whose religion is the religion of the eighth century Popes, even though he uses the religious vocabulary that has been handed down from them to him.

Since the Roman element in Charles's empire is a reminiscence of the past, an assertion of a great tradition, it is impossible to understand it without a brief retrospect of that past out of which the tradition grew. Such a telescopic survey is apt to give a false sense of the passage of time. Let us therefore apply the measuring rod of time with a certain artificial rigidity, and, taking the successive centenaries of the death of Augustus, offer a few notes on the development of Rome and all that Rome came to stand for, at each of these dates.

114 A.D. One of the greatest of the Emperors, Trajan, is ruling in Rome. Though the capital has been stained by many crimes incidental to palace revolutions, the Roman world in general has enjoyed such peace and order as had never prevailed around the Mediterranean before. The

CHARLEMAGNE

From an Engraving by J. Kirchner, after Albrecht Durer

Empire has reached its greatest extent. Tacitus, the last great classical historian, is nearing the end of his life. His friend, Pliny, governor of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, has been corresponding with the Emperor on questions connected with the peculiar and troublesome sect of the Christians. This correspondence is the first detailed account of Christianity from a pagan source that we possess.

214 A.D. The quality of imperial statesmanship has declined steeply since the death of the famous philosopher-Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, thirty years before, and the "Barbarians" of unconquered northern Europe, Goths and the like, are a source of chronic trouble on the Danube. But throughout the interior of the Empire calm prevails, and we are entering on the period of the codification of Roman Law, which is far the greatest single achievement of the Roman Empire. Ulpian, one of the great legal commentators, was at work at this date.

314 A.D. Centralised government from Rome has finally broken down. Thirty years before, Diocletian had attempted a kind of federal system by creating four colleague emperors, each responsible for a quarter of the empire, but the result was civil wars between the "colleagues." Constantine has just become undisputed master of the West, and, by his Edict of Milan, has ended the last and most terrible of the Christian persecutions. In a few years he will conquer his Eastern rival, move his capital from Rome to Constantinople, adopt Christianity as the official religion of the Imperial Government, and preside at Nicaea over the first General Council of the Church.

414 A.D. Rome has been sacked (four years before) by Alaric the Visigoth, a terrible symbol of the crumbling of a worn-out civilisation. The Barbarians have not conquered the Empire; they have been absorbed into it and are lowering it to their own level. The only leader whom the puppet Emperor in Rome could have opposed to Alaric with any hope of success was another Barbarian, Stilicho, whom he

had treacherously assassinated two years before. The only hero on the Roman side is the Bishop of Rome, Innocent I. Alaric, himself an Arian, or heretic Christian, had spared the churches when he devastated all else. The Emperor left Rome before the siege and did not return. In his absence, Innocent took the lead in the task of repairing the ruined capital. This is also the age of Jerome, the translator of the Vulgate, which is to this day the Bible of the Roman Church, and of Augustine who, in his *De Civitate Dei*, foreshadows a new and greater spiritual Roman Empire rising on the ruins of the old. We are approaching the birth of the Papacy.

514 A.D. The last Roman Emperor in the West has been deposed forty years before. Theodoric, most enlightened of Barbarians, is King of Italy, and is trying to teach the Christians (himself an Arian) the duty of toleration. In that task, needless to say, he will fail. He admits a nominal vassalage to the " Roman " (or " Greek ") Emperor ruling at Constantinople. This is the celebrated Justinian, during whose reign the final codification of Roman Law was made. After the death of Theodoric, Justinian's armies will make a temporary reconquest of Italy, much to the satisfaction of the bishops of Rome, who prefer an imperial master out of Italy to a royal master within it.

614 A.D. Gregory the Great, the bishop of Rome who deserves more completely than any of his predecessors the title of founder of the Papacy, is ten years dead. The last and most troublesome of all the barbarian invaders, the Lombards, have been ravaging " Roman " Italy for half a century. There are now three powers in Italy : the Lombards, with a king at Pavia and more or less independent dukes scattered up and down the country ; the Exarch, or Viceroy, of the Emperor, ruling, from Ravenna, a province stretching along the northern part of the Adriatic coast of Italy ; and the Pope, not yet the ruler of the modern Papal States but the landlord of large tracts situated in various parts

of Italy, and, much more than the Exarch, the champion of Roman tradition against the " unspeakable " Lombards.

714 A.D. The situations of Pope, Exarch, and Lombard remains more or less unchanged in Italy, but in the wider empire a wonderful and horrible thing has been done ; as wonderful and horrible as the earlier barbarian invasions. The new militant religion of Mohammed, founded in Arabia in 622, has grown like a mushroom and spread like a pestilence. Jerusalem has fallen, and Antioch, the earliest homes of the Church ; Constantinople itself has already stood its first Moslem siege ; Africa has been lost, and the Arabs have crossed the straits of Gibraltar and overthrown the nominally " Roman " Visigothic kingdom of Spain. The new conquering power was to meet its match for the first time eighteen years later, when it was defeated in the middle of France, at the battle of Poitiers, by the Frankish hosts of Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charles the Great.

Yet, through all these transformations, the idea of Roman Empire, universal and eternal, persisted in men's minds. The barbarian chiefs themselves, in the very act of destroying its realities, claimed to be not conquerors but colonists within it. Much more steadfastly did the Church, the true heir of the Empire, stand for the maintenance of the tradition which had come to be identical in men's minds with civilisation itself. The Papacy stood for the tradition of Julius Caesar as well as for the tradition of Jesus Christ. Such a tradition could not, of course, have defied the facts much longer ; but it so happened that, in Charles, a man of genius was to arise who would give the ideal once again a fleeting semblance of reality, and thus start it on a fresh lease of life far stranger and more fantastic than what had gone before.

The success of Islam could not but lead Christendom to consider its own shortcomings. The Church had, in fact, won the ignorant masses of the Roman world, not so much by converting them, as by accepting them and giving new names to their pagan superstitions. Shrines of the old gods

and goddesses had become the shrines of Christian saints, and the result was a popular worship of images barely distinguishable from polytheism. In 726, Leo the Isaurian, one of the greatest of the emperors, issued from Constantinople his first edict against images, and entered on a campaign of premature Puritanism, in which he and his son after him wasted their energies and destroyed their popularity. The Popes eagerly championed the popular side, and in 731 Gregory III. held a Council in Rome and condemned the religious policy of his imperial master. The slender ties binding the Roman East and the Roman West seemed about to be snapped at last.

At the same time as the Papacy turned its back on Constantinople, it turned its face towards the rulers of the Franks. Who so proper a champion of Rome as Charles Martel, the " Hammer " of the Saracens ? The Pope was, as usual, at war with the Lombards. Charles was too busy beyond the Alps to assist him ; also, perhaps, shrewd enough to realise that victories won beyond the Alpine barrier would bring a Frankish king more glory than profit. But after Charles's death, his son Pepin was prepared to strike a bargain. The Arnulfings, as the great Frankish family is called, were undisputed rulers of Frankland, but by title they were only " Mayors of the Palace," and the titular kingship still belonged to the Merovings (*rois fainéants*), the descendants of Clovis. If the Pope would make him king, and sanction the dethronement of the powerless Childeric, Pepin would invade Italy and destroy the Lombard power. A great missionary, Boniface, an Englishman from York, who had devoted his long life to the conversion of the heathens beyond the Rhine, was the chief inspirer of the alliance. Boniface was in truth more papalist than the Popes themselves had yet become ; in his mingled ardour for the spread of Christianity, the exaltation of the Pope within the Church, and the Franco-Roman alliance, he counts as perhaps the chief architect of the fortunes of Charles the Great.

So all was arranged. In 750 Pepin was made King of the Franks at the " command " of the Pope, who absolved him from his oath of allegiance to King Childeric. He was anointed by Boniface, who thus revived, as the privilege of the Church, the old Jewish ceremonial whereby Samuel had consecrated Saul, and Zadok Solomon. In 751 the Lombards conquered the Exarchate. In 753 Pope Stephen took the unprecedented step of crossing the Alps, to visit his ally. He crowned him afresh, and conferred upon him the title of Patrician, which carried with it apparently the position of first citizen, or " Duke," of Rome. In the next year Pepin crossed the Alps, like a long line of rulers of France after him, defeated the Lombards, recovered the Exarchate, and presented it to the Pope. Thus were founded those Papal States which only disappeared from the map when Italy was united in 1860-1870.

In 768 Charles succeeded his father. Once more the Pope and the Lombards were at war, and once more the Pope appealed to the Frank. There was a severe struggle at the Frankish court between the Lombard and the Roman parties, the party that stood for treating the Alps as a frontier and the party which already, perhaps, visualised the imperial crown as the goal of ambition. For a short time Charles, under the influence of his mother, made a close alliance with the Lombards, and married the Lombard king's daughter. But the old policy of Pepin soon recovered control of his son. Either the bride proved unattractive—she was divorced with a promptitude worthy of Henry VIII.—or papal diplomacy proved too clever,[1] or else motives of ambition conquered motives of prudence. Charles invaded Italy, overthrew his momentary father-in-law, and sent him to end his days in a monastery. The Lombard monarchy was extinguished, and Rome fell within the dominion of the

[1] Perhaps diplomacy is not quite the right word. We find the Pope writing, " Do not the Franks know that all the children of the Lombards are lepers ? . . . May they broil with the devil and his angels in everlasting fire ! " etc.

Frankish king. A whole quarter of a century was to pass before the famous imperial coronation, but, in fact though not yet in name, there was already once again an Emperor in the West.

(ii) THE FRANKISH EMPIRE

The Franks were by origin but one of the many tribes of barbarians—Goths, Vandals, Angles, Saxons, Lombards and others—that rolled over the ruins of the Roman Empire in the fourth and fifth and sixth centuries. Their more splendid destiny was perhaps due mainly to the accident which brought them into Gaul. Here they found a richer Roman civilisation than did the Saxons in Britain, and at the same time a country sufficiently near in climate and character to their original home for them to escape the degeneration that seems to have befallen the Lombards of Italy and the Visigoths of Spain. They also had the advantage of religious sympathy with their more civilised Gallic subjects, for, while the Goths and Lombards had accepted Christianity in its heretical Arian form, the Franks became true Catholics, Clovis, their first great king, being baptised in 496 by the bishop of Reims. Even so, Frankish history between Clovis and Charles Martel is bloodstained and unpromising enough. The Franks had no law of primogeniture, and the kingdom was frequently subdivided by bequest, only to be reunited by crime. It was only accident that freed Pepin and Charles from having to share their inheritance with a brother. Pepin's elder brother, Carloman, withdrew to a monastery to expiate, it is said, a crime of treachery, and Charles's younger brother, another Carloman, died just before Charles's first invasion of Italy, three years after his accession.

The French and the Germans, who have fought over most things, have fought over the body of Charles the Great, each claiming him as a national hero and an ancestor. They should be thankful to share him, for he was certainly neither a Frenchman nor a German in the modern sense. He was

a Frank, a man of the Rhine, Teuton by birth, Roman by religion and by aspiration. The capital of his choice was Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle); apparently he only once visited Paris. His most trusted counsellor was neither a Frenchman nor a German, but an Englishman.

The most laborious undertaking of Charles's long reign proved to be the conquest of the heathen Saxons between the Rhine and the Elbe, in the districts now covered by Hanover and Oldenburg. Here he accomplished, on a smaller scale, a work like that of Julius Caesar in Gaul, and made a permanent extension of the frontiers of civilisation. These campaigns lasted off and on from 772 to 804. Christianity and civilisation were in that age regarded as interchangeable terms; so Charles insisted on the conversion as well as the submission of his enemies, and the Saxons stood up for their ancient beliefs as the symbol of their independence, and were a very much more formidable enemy than the impulsive but apparently unstable Lombards of Italy. After ten years (782) the conquest seemed complete, and a Saxon code was issued, in which refusal to fast in Lent and hiding to escape baptism were made capital offences. Then the storm broke out again; we read of organised massacres, organised compulsory baptisms of prisoners, a special catechism, in which death is the penalty for wrong answers, and, finally of wholesale transportations of Saxon population into France and of Frankish population into Saxonia, after the manner of Nebuchadnezzar or Peter the Great. One can only say that history shows many crimes of equal dimensions committed with far less worthy motives.

Christianity enforced at the point of the sword, a religion synonymous with submission, was likely to be a somewhat soulless affair. The new converts declared it meant nothing but bowing to the gods of the Franks and cleaving all one's days to a single wife. It is interesting to hear that it meant even as much as the second of these, especially as Charles himself seems to have been a practical, even though not a

theoretical, polygamist. The missionary, however, followed somewhat later in the footsteps of the soldier, healing the wounds of conquest and presenting the new religion in a more favourable light, and the extension of Christendom from the Rhine to the Elbe, proved the most permanent achievement of Charles's career.

In the intervals of his Saxon campaigns Charles conquered Bavaria, which was already Christian, harassed the Czechs of Bohemia, and uprooted the Avars, a Hunnish people, akin to the Magyars and Bulgars, living in what would to-day be called Jugo-Slavia. This mysterious people seem to have possessed an immense hoard of gold, and its dispersion, after Charles's conquest, caused a general rise in prices similar to that which followed the opening of the Rand gold mines. Political economy was already at work, though there were as yet no political economists.

The expeditions against the Avars occurred between 790 and 800. Earlier than this, in 777, three Saracen chiefs of northern Spain had visited Charles at his camp at Paderborn in Saxony, and besought his aid against the Arab Caliph of Cordova. Eager to extend his influence wherever opportunity offered, he invaded Spain in the following year and captured Pampeluna, but, meeting thereafter with further resistance, he decided to return. While he was withdrawing his army through the Pyrenees, the rearguard, under Roland, Duke of Brittany, was attacked and destroyed by the Basques. This, the least important and the least successful of Charles's undertakings, was magnified by later legends till it became the most famous incident of his career. The age of the Crusades transformed Charles into a Crusader, confusing him with his grandfather in the process, and the " Song of Roland " records a mighty confusion of battles between Christian and Pagan in Spain. In other legends Charles is described as delivering Rome from the Saracens and visiting Jerusalem. Here again we have the marks of barbaric idealism ; for the more critical Romans of eight

hundred years earlier it had sufficed to spin fairy-tales, not of Caesar, but of his legendary ancestor, Aeneas.

When Charles made his first expedition to Italy and extinguished the Lombard monarchy in 774, he took the title of King of the Lombards in addition to his previous titles of King of the Franks and Patrician. He paid only three subsequent visits to his Italian dominions, and entrusted their government to his ablest son, Pepin, when Pepin was old enough to assume the responsibility. Whether these arrangements coincided with the aspirations of the Pope it is hard to say; probably the Pope would have preferred an ally all-obedient to the Holy See and all-powerful against its many enemies—an impossible combination. As it was, Charles was in the main an absentee from Italy, and a continuous correspondence passed to and fro between the Pope and King. We possess only the Papal half of the correspondence. It is written in a Latin disfigured by elementary errors, and is at once complimentary and querulous. Hadrian I. (Pope 772-795) complains of his inability to assert his authority at Ravenna, in Spoleto, in Benevento, and generally speaking throughout his now extensive dominions. Is it in vain that Rome has favoured the kings of the Franks above all others? Hadrian's successor, Leo III., was the victim of revolution within his own capital. In 799, he was assaulted, wounded and imprisoned by the nephews of his predecessor, but escaped and journeyed to Charles's camp in Saxony. These events led to the last visit of the Frankish king to Rome, where the grateful Pope conferred on his deliverer the greatest honour in the world, crowning him with a golden crown, while the Roman citizens burst into a joyful shout: "To Carolus Augustus, crowned by God, mighty and pacific Emperor, be life and victory." [1]

Charles's dominions, at their fullest extent, included all of modern France and the small strip of Christian territory on the south slopes of the Pyrenees, north Germany as far

[1] The significance of this event is considered in the next section.

as the Elbe, south Germany to the frontiers of Bohemia, and beyond that the land of the Avars, between the Danube and the Adriatic, and Italy to a short distance beyond Rome.

With England his relations were unimportant. At one time there was talk of marriage between his son and the daughter of Offa of Mercia, and the young Egbert, afterwards King of Wessex and grandfather of Alfred, grew up as an exile at Charles's court, and may well have learnt there the wisdom that fitted him to become the founder of the royal house from which all our subsequent kings are descended.[1] At the other end of the then known world, he corresponded with Haroun-al-Raschid, the Caliph of Baghdad, famous in the " Arabian Nights," received from him the present of an elephant, and a promise that the Christians resident in or visiting Jerusalem should not be molested.

His relations with the imperial house at Constantinople were more important. Charles seems to have entertained the fantastic design of uniting once more the East and the West. Early in his reign he gave favourable consideration to a proposal of marriage between one of his daughters and the boy Emperor, Constantine VI. A eunuch of the name of Elisha was sent to the Frankish court to instruct the little princess in the Greek language. All this came to nothing, and in 796 Constantine was deposed by his own mother, the Athenian Irene, who then became Empress. After his own imperial coronation, Charles made an offer of marriage to this criminal adventuress, but it is doubtful whether it reached her before her own deposition. In the eyes of the rulers of Constantinople Charles was a mere usurper, but it appears that, at the very end of his reign, he secured recognition of his imperial rank by transferring Venice from his own to his rival's sphere of authority.

[1] Except, of course, the four Norman kings. Henry I. married a daughter of the old Saxon house, and through her the blood of Egbert passes into Henry II., his successors.

But the greatness of a ruler must be measured, not by the extent of his dominions, but by the spirit in which he rules them. How did Charles cope with the enormously difficult task of ruling a great empire in the middle of the Dark Ages? Three chief instruments of his government may be distinguished: the Assemblies or Diets, the Capitularies or Edicts, and the *Missi Dominici* or royal deputies on circuit.

In barbarous times the worst vice of government is not excess but defect of control, and the quality of any government is found to be roughly proportionate to the quantity of its official activities. In the forty-six years of his reign Charles held thirty-five Diets at various cities, mostly on the Rhine, a record the more remarkable seeing that he undertook military campaigns as well in at least thirty-seven of these forty-six years. At these Diets the King carefully gathered information as to the progress of every part of his dominions, and issued his Capitularies.

The Capitularies (or Edicts) are sixty in number, and contain over one thousand separate articles. To the modern student accustomed to the scientific classification of things political, they present a strange jumble of legislative enactments, statements of policy, judicial decisions, administrative notes, and moral exhortations. Nothing could be less like the scientific codes of classical Rome. But they reveal the character of the man. Charles was always inclined to promote the authority of the Church and to support the authority of bishops against that of barons, as the more civilised and intelligent against the less civilised and intelligent class. It is to him that the great Prince-bishoprics of the Rhine valley, afterwards the Electorates of Mayence, Cologne, and Treves, owe their beginnings. But he had a shrewd eye for the failings of the ecclesiastics. He writes, for example: "Desire the bishops and abbots to tell us truly what is the meaning of the phrase always in their mouths: 'Renounce the world'; and by what signs we

may distinguish those who have renounced the world from those who still adhere to the world. Is it merely that the former do not bear arms or marry publicly? To consider further, whether he is to be considered as having renounced the world, whom we see labouring, day by day, by all sorts of means, to augment his possessions, now making use, for this purpose, of menaces of eternal flames, now of promises of eternal beatitude; in the name of God, or of some saint, despoiling simple-minded men of their property, to the infinite prejudice of their lawful heirs, who are, in very many cases, from the misery in which they are thus involved, driven by their necessities to robbery and all sorts of disorders and crimes." Such a statesman might be the champion of the Church in its true work, but he was unlikely to be the pliant tool of a politically-minded Papacy.

Yet we find at least one very dubious principle introduced into the Saxon capitularies. "If any man, having committed one of these mortal crimes in secret, shall fly to the priest, and, after confession, offer penance, by the witness of that priest let him be excused from death." Presumably the penance would not avail a criminal who had already been apprehended by the secular arm. None the less, the use of the Church as a criminal insurance society, though it might exalt the social importance of the priest, would not be likely to exalt his spiritual usefulness, nor would it assist the administration of justice. Such a provision opens the way, in fact, to that utterly wrong and immoral conception of Christian "forgiveness of sins" which, seven centuries later, provoked the great onslaught of Luther.

The *Missi Dominici* were Charles's device for controlling the growing power of feudalism. Every state larger than a city has to solve the problem of the balance between central and local government. In the modern world, with its rapid means of communication, there is a real danger that central government may take too much upon itself, draw all authority to the capital, and devitalise provincial energies.

At any period earlier than, say, that of Louis XIV., the danger was all the other way. Feudalism, in its political aspect, is nothing but a system of local government in which, since the local governor is a hereditary land-holder, the scales are heavily weighted against the central authority. The excuse for its existence is that it was actually the only way of getting the work of local government done in a semi-barbaric age. The *Missi Dominici* were travelling inspectors, holding their office for a year. Wherever they were, they temporarily took precedence of the authority of the local functionary. They were the unifying force within the Empire. Through them the great king's eyes penetrated his vast dominions, and his strong arm made itself felt. With Charles's death they quickly disappeared, and feudalism riots and tyrannises unchecked. Nothing is seen like them again, until the first two Henries applied a similar system to the very much smaller and simpler problem of England.

Perhaps Charles is seen at his greatest in his services to the cause of learning. Though he could not write himself, he delighted in literature and delighted in being read to; among his favourite books was that *De Civitate Dei* of Augustine, which describes an ideal Christian empire, such as Charles himself was striving for. He enjoyed the society of learned men, and gathered around himself a little group of scholars such as Western Europe had not seen since the darkness descended on classical Rome: Eginhard, his own biographer; Paul the Deacon, the historian of the Lombards; and, most eminent of all, Alcuin the Englishman, who had fallen in love with the poetry of Virgil when a boy of eleven, in his Yorkshire home; and many others. It was Alcuin who remonstrated with Charles on the excessive violence of his methods of Christianising the Saxons, and probably it was Alcuin again who encouraged him to take the great step of reviving the Roman imperial title. It is notable that the men of Charles's court wrote much better Latin than the officials of the Papacy. From them spread a real

revival of learning, a "Carolingian Renaissance" which carried the torch of the ancient culture through the two-and-a-half dark centuries that followed, on into the dawn of the Middle Ages.

Nor was this learning, if Charles could have fulfilled his ideals, to be the privilege of a small aristocracy. "Let there be schools," runs the Capitulary, "in which boys may learn to read. In every monastery and bishop's palace let there be copies of the Psalms, arithmetic books and grammars, with Catholic books well edited. . . . Enquire how priests are wont to instruct their catechumens in the Christian faith": and again, "Let not the scribes write badly!"

Charles himself seems to have known enough Greek to converse with the envoys from Byzantium in their own language, and enough music to insist on the correct performance of the Gregorian music in his churches. He was responsible for instituting a uniform system of coinage, weights, and measures, through his dominions; to him we owe the division of the pound into twenty shillings and the shilling into twelve pence. He planned a canal from the Main to the Danube, though his engineers proved unequal to executing the work. But theology was undoubtedly his favourite study. Charles's idea of a stimulating evening was to collect together his learned men, and confront them with such posers as, "What is the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost?" Theology was, in fact, at once the inspiration and the blight of the Carolingian Renaissance. It was its inspiration, since, without the religious motive, there would have been no Renaissance at all: even arithmetic was justified principally because it enabled the proficient to calculate the date of Easter. But clerical prepossessions fatally narrowed the very movement they inspired. It is distressing to find that even Alcuin, who had delighted in Virgil as a boy, excluded that heathen author from the curriculum of his schools. The only readable book left us by these literary enthusiasts is Eginhard's life of his master.

(iii) THE IMPERIAL CORONATION AND ITS REMOTER CONSEQUENCES

Charles accepted the imperial crown, in the old basilica of St. Peter in Rome,[1] on Christmas Day of the year 800, in the thirty-third year of his reign and (probably) the fifty-ninth year of his life. A mystery surrounds the circumstances of this famous scene. There was no regular coronation service. Charles was attending mass, and the Pope placed the crown upon his head, as he knelt in prayer by the high altar, after the conclusion of the reading of the Gospel for the day. That the congregation knew what was intended is proved by their spontaneous shouts: "Carolo Augusto, a Deo coronato, magno et pacifico Imperatori vita et victoria." But to the Emperor himself the coronation appears to have been a surprise, and not altogether an agreeable one. His friend and biographer, Eginhard, writes: "At this time he received the name of Imperator and Augustus, which he at first so much disliked, that he declared he would never have entered the church on that day, though it was a high festival, if he could have foreknown the pontiff's design. He bore, however, with great patience the odium that attached to him, on account of his new title, through the indignation of the Roman [*i.e.* Eastern] Emperors. And he vanquished their stubbornness by his own far-surpassing magnanimity, sending them frequent embassies and in his letters addressing them as brothers."

This statement cannot possibly be ignored; yet it is impossible to suppose that the Pope, who owed everything to Charles, and had been, only a year before, a helpless fugitive in his German camp, would have ventured upon

[1] This, the oldest and stateliest temple of Christian Rome, a building in the classical Roman style, had been erected by the orders of Constantine the Great. It stood on the site of the present "St. Peter's," which was built in the first half of the sixteenth century. The church of Constantine was, at the time of Charles's coronation, nearly a hundred years older than the present "St. Peter's" is to-day.

such a momentous act if Charles had not already considered, and favourably considered, the assumption of the imperial name. We have a curious letter written by Alcuin to his friend and master on receipt of news of the outrage perpetrated upon Pope Leo in Rome the year before. "Hitherto," says Alcuin, "there have been three persons in the world higher than all others; one is the Apostolic sublimity which is accustomed to rule by delegated power the seat of St. Peter, Prince of Apostles. But what deeds have been done to him who was ruler of that see your worshipful goodness has deigned to inform me. The next is the Imperial Dignity and secular power of the Second Rome. How impiously the Governor of that Empire has been deposed, not by strangers, but by his own people and fellow citizens, universal fame hath abundantly reported.[1] The third is the Royal Dignity, in which the providence of our Lord Jesus Christ hath ordained you for the ruler of the Christian people, more excellent in power than the aforesaid dignities, more illustrious in wisdom, more sublime in the dignity of your kingdom. Lo, now upon you alone reposes the whole salvation of the Church of Christ. . . . On no account must you forego the care of the Head. It is a smaller matter that the Feet should be in pain than the Head." Alcuin goes on to explain that the Head is Rome and the Feet Saxony. Charles must attend to his Roman duties, even if it means a temporary neglect of the Saxon wars.

The general tendency of this letter is obvious; not less so is its diplomatic reticence. We may conjecture that a considerable body of opinion, mostly ecclesiastical, both in Rome and at Charles's court, was eager for the assumption of the imperial title; that Charles had given a cautious approval, but reserved to himself the choice of the time and of ways and means; that, by the coronation at St. Peter's, the ecclesiastical party took this choice out of his hands.

Eginhard says that Charles disliked the coronation because

[1] Referring to the deposition of Constantine VI. by his mother, Irene.

it embittered his relations with the " Roman " Emperors of the East. Charles, perhaps, understood the conception of Roman Empire better than his ecclesiastical friends. It was of the very nature of " Empire," as distinct from Kingship that it should be unique and all-embracing ; it should include the whole *Civitas Dei*, the whole of Christendom, or it was not Empire at all, but usurpation. It was true that, between the years 395 and 476 there had been two " Emperors," one at Rome or Ravenna and the other at Constantinople (though it is doubtful if this fact was known to the scanty historical scholarship of the eighth century), but these Emperors had been " colleagues " ruling a single Empire, like the consuls of the old republic, even though they lived in different capitals and occasionally made war upon one another. The coronation of Charles was in fact an act of usurpation, and, as we have already seen, Charles at once attempted to regularise his position by proposing marriage with Irene, and, when this failed, secured, after much trouble, a grudging recognition of his imperial title by the cession of Venice. Still, an act of usurpation it continued to be. Henceforth there were two Empires, and neither of them could claim to be a true Empire without committing the absurdity of denying the existence of the other.

The defence of the papal policy must be that " true " Empire was no longer possible ; that Charles's overtures to Irene were outside practical politics ; that " East was East and West was West and never the twain should meet " ; that it was therefore better to ignore a problem that was insoluble, and seek to strengthen and stabilise, by the imperial name, the great achievement of the Frankish house.

Charles may have felt another objection to the coronation which his biographer does not mention. He was a thorough " Erastian " ; he believed that the Church could best do its work if it recognised a strict subordination to the secular authority. But if it was admitted that a Pope could make

an emperor, he could unmake him also. His father Pepin had already allowed a dangerous precedent to be created, when he grounded on Papal authority his right to depose the last Merovingian king. It is significant that in 813, when Charles felt his own death drawing near, he arranged for the coronation of his own son, Louis. Here there was no Papal intervention. The ceremony was held at Aix; Charles preached a sermon to his son, concluding with the words: "Wilt thou obey all these my precepts?" Louis answered: "Most willingly, with the help of God." Whereupon Charles lifted the crown from the high altar and placed it upon the head of his son. But it was all in vain. The precedents were already too strong, and Louis, who won for himself the ill-omened title of "the Pious," got himself crowned afresh by the Pope two years after his father's death.

The Empire of Charles, in strange contrast to the Empire of Julius and Augustus, proved almost as ephemeral as that of Napoleon, who claimed to be the heir of both. The Frankish house had no system of primogeniture, and Charles himself had arranged for a partition of his dominions between three sons, which would have taken effect had not two of them died before him. Louis the Pious also had three sons, and they began their civil wars long before their incompetent father was in his grave. Louis the Pious died in 840. In 843 the Treaty of Verdun divided the Empire between Charles the Bald, who took France, Louis the German who received Germany east of the Rhine and the south-eastern territories, and Lothar, the eldest, who received the imperial title and a middle kingdom stretching from Holland up the Rhine, down the Rhone, and over the Alps to Italy and Rome. Lothar has given his name to Lotharingia or Lorraine, the province which has been a bone of contention between France and Germany ever since. It has been said, with pardonable exaggeration, that all subsequent European history is a commentary on the Treaty of Verdun. However that may be, the writing of the commentary was soon begun.

Less than thirty years later (Treaty of Mersen, 870), the impossible middle kingdom was squeezed out of existence, and France and Germany stood cheek by jowl. France took the Italian territory, which she could not hold, and the now meaningless imperial title; Germany took those territories between the Rhine and the Meuse in which just frontiers still prove so hard to draw.

Three forces destroyed the Frankish Empire. First, the force of nationality; Gaul had eight centuries of Roman tradition behind her, Germany had none. This fact, much more than any mysterious virtues or vices of the "Teutonic" race, made the French and the Germans separate nations. Shortly before the treaty of Verdun, there was a curious and significant scene at Strassburg. Charles from the West and Louis from the East were combining their forces against elder brother Lothar. It was thought good to administer an oath of alliance to the two allied armies. For this purpose two languages were needed. The forces of Louis took the oath in the *Lingua Tedesca*, the forces of Charles in the *Lingua Romana rustica*. Here we have the rudiments of the German and French languages, and language is a greater factor than race in making a nation.

The second force was the outer barbarism. Once again, after a brief and partial respite, the raids of the heathen were beginning. Viking pirates scoured the northern and western seas, and made their ways up the river valleys; Saracen pirates swarmed around Italy, and reduced the Mediterranean to the state it had been in before Pompey destroyed the pirates of Roman Republican times. From the east, Slavs pushed their way across the northern plains, and Magyars up the valley of the Danube. The darkness of the ninth century descended like a pall upon the bright promise of the eighth.

The third force, a resultant of the first two, was feudalism. While incompetent kings waged aimless wars, and exchanged claims to provinces they could not govern, while desperate

savages ravaged every frontier of Christendom, the only salvation for the people was in the strong arm of the competent man on the spot, whoever he might be. In name, Charles's empire falls into two or three kingdoms ; in actual fact it falls into dozens and scores of feudal principalities.

Such was the fate of the Frankish Empire ; for the Roman title was reserved a far stranger destiny. The last descendant of Charles to claim it was Charles the Fat, who was deposed by his own subjects in 887. For the next eighty years the title was dragged in the mud by a series of obscure adventurers, until a powerful German king, Otto the Great, coming to Rome, like Charles before him, to settle the affairs of the Papacy, secured, like Charles, a solemn Papal coronation in 962. This is the true beginning of the "Holy Roman Empire." Henceforth for nearly three hundred years great German kings wear the imperial crown, claim thereby an authority over the rulers of Italy, involve themselves in a life and death struggle with the Papacy, and ultimately, grasping at the shadow of Empire, lose the substance of German kingship. This Empire was far less "Roman" than that of Charles, and, but for his august example, the Roman imperial idea would long ere this have died and been buried.

Though not buried, it was in fact already dead. After the line of great Emperors ended in 1250 with Frederick II., there were no more true kings of Germany, but the title of Emperor passed, along with the title of German king, from one princely house to another till it came to rest, in 1438, with the Hapsburgs, archdukes of Austria. These archdukes soon acquired, in addition to Austria, the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, and for the next three hundred and fifty years the title of Emperor belongs to the rulers of that miscellaneous jumble of nationalities called Austria, (or, after 1867, Austria-Hungary) which fell to pieces at last after the Great War. This was the Holy Roman Empire of which the wit said that it was neither Holy nor Roman

nor an Empire. The last Holy Roman Emperor resigned his title at the command of Napoleon in 1806, and called himself henceforward not Roman Emperor but Emperor of Austria. The title had lived for just over a thousand years since Charles's coronation.

But this was not all. "Emperor" seemed to have become the proper designation for a German king, and when Germany was once more united under Prussia, after the battle of Sedan, a new Caesar and Imperator (Kaiser and Emperor) was acclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

Meanwhile Roman Emperors at Constantinople ruled a diminishing dominion until overthrown by the Turks in 1453, but just as first Aix and ultimately Vienna became the heir of Rome, so Moscow became the heir of Constantinople, and the Russian king, married to a daughter of the last Christian ruler at Constantinople, asserted his claim to be the overlord and protector of the Eastern Church by taking also the name of Caesar (Tsar).

The last and most ridiculous of the Caesars was Ferdinand of Bulgaria who, in 1909, took the title of Tsar as a means of asserting his independence of the Sultan. The Great War, whatever else it may have done, has cleared the world of "Caesars."

IV

INNOCENT III. (1160-1216)

(i) THE GREAT AGE OF THE PAPACY

FOUR hundred years after the death of Charlemagne the central figure of European history still bases his authority on Rome. He is not a king but a priest, yet a priest whose conception of his religious functions is so enormous that his rule may well be called imperial; a Pope, but also, by intention, though not by title, an Emperor. The Papacy claims to have been founded by St. Peter, and to have handed down the authority of the "Prince of the Apostles" to the present day through an unbroken succession of two hundred and sixty-six Popes. But out of that long period of nearly nineteen hundred years there is one period of about two-and-a-half centuries, stretching from the time of the Norman conquest of England to the reign of Edward I. and the foundation of the English Parliament, which was the Great Age of the Papacy, the period in which the Papacy dominated and set the stamp of its character, not only upon the religious life, but also upon the politics of Western and Central Europe. The founder of the greatness of the Papacy was Hildebrand, known after he became Pope as Gregory VII. (1073-1085). But the Papacy itself as a working institution is more curious and more interesting than the career of any one of the occupants of the Papal throne, and the working of the institution can be best illustrated by examining, not the constructive genius of Hildebrand, but the administrative

activity of the most powerful of his successors, Innocent III. (1198-1216). It is as though, in order to study the working of the Roman Empire, we passed by Julius Caesar and selected Trajan.

It is extremely difficult for the modern mind to understand the Middle Ages and in particular its greatest and most typical institution, the Papacy—much more difficult than to understand classical Greece, or imperial Rome, or unlettered barbarism. What we find so hard to grasp is not the external events themselves, but the state of mind of the actors in them, and, in particular, the way in which they envisaged the sphere of religion in life, and the relationship between religion and politics. Again and again as one reads the letters or the speeches of the great men of this period, one is inclined to fling down the book and say, " These men were either consummate hypocrites or else utter fools ! " Yet they were probably about as honest and about as intelligent as we are. This difficulty of understanding is proved by the writings of modern historians ; for in the process of explaining they seem driven either to idealise or to condemn. It used to be the common practice to describe the Middle Ages as a mere extension of the Dark Ages ; " medieval darkness " and " medieval ignorance " were common phrases to cover the period that produced St. Francis of Assisi, Dante, Gothic architecture, folk-song, and the universities. A modern school of writers, on the other hand, seems to regard the Middle Ages as the lost Golden Age. Mr. Belloc, for example, writes : " Two notes mark the time, a note of youth and a note of content. The ineradicable dream of a permanent and satisfactory society seemed to have taken on flesh and to have come to live for ever among Christian men. . . . Above all, an intense and living appetite for truth, a perception of reality, invigorated these generations. They saw what was before them, they called things by their names. Never was political and social formula less divorced from fact, never was the mass of our civilisation better

welded." [1] The truth, it may be assumed, lies somewhere between these two judgments, but the diversity of the judgments shows how hard it is to find the truth. One caution, however, may be offered before we proceed. When we find people doing things in a different way from ourselves, we are apt to conclude that it is an inferior way. It is, most people would admit, extremely difficult to resist the impression that foreign fashions in dressing and eating stamp foreigners as inferior to English people. Yet we know, if we reflect, that this is the merest prejudice. In the same way, when we study an institution that is as strange to us as is the mediaeval Papacy, it is safe to discount something from our disapproval, on the score of natural prejudice.

We have seen how the career of Charlemagne gave new life to the aspiration after Roman and imperial unity. But this conception of unity was no longer purely political and secular. It was the Pope who had devised the coronation of Charles as Emperor, and his Empire was already conceived less as a union of Roman citizens than as a union of Christian believers. In Charles's foreign policy, conquest and conversion went hand in hand, and were almost different names for the same thing. Men's minds were ceasing to distinguish between an Empire and a Church. But in that case might not the Pope be the supreme ruler of the Empire-Church, as reasonably as the Emperor? So in fact it had come about.[2] "If a man consider the original of this great ecclesiastical dominion," wrote Hobbes, in the seventeenth century, "he will easily perceive that the Papacy is no other than the ghost of the Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof."

Here then we have the central fact of a priest claiming, by religious authority, the right to rule in spheres which seem to us quite outside the sphere of religion. Christ had

[1] *Europe and the Faith,* chapter on "The Middle Ages."

[2] A brief historical sketch of the period between Charles and Innocent III. follows in the next section.

said : " Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's." The Pope is the Vicar of Christ and the " ghost " of Caesar, and claims what is due to both authorities. Yet the claim was never successfully enforced. Human nature was against it, and not only human nature but also the political tendencies of the age. For the period we are studying is not only the Great Age of the Papacy ; it is also the age of the beginnings of the modern European nations under strong kings, William the Conqueror and Henry II. in England, Philip Augustus in France, and the great emperors such as Frederic Barbarossa in Germany. At their greatest, the Popes never really wielded the authority of a Roman Emperor ; they were not so much emperors as imperial pretenders or claimants. Hence throughout this period of history there is a sense of make-believe, of theory which does not correspond with facts, a use of religious vocabulary to describe facts essentially political. How was it that this unreality was so long tolerated ?

In the first place, the mediaeval mind was before all things deductive. It started from a simple and all-embracing theory, and, working downwards, deduced what ought to be in the sphere of practice ; from this it was but a step to embodying that " ought to be " in a concrete political institution. Mediaeval thought starts from the axiom that God rules the world—God's monarchy. God must have a representative on earth—the Pope. But what about the Emperor ? Well, He must have *two* representatives on earth, because a man's life is twofold, the outer life of action, which ends with death, and the inner life of the soul, which is a preparation for Life Eternal. So the Pope and the Emperor are partners. Yet, because of the impossibility of separating in practice the inner and the outer life, Pope and Emperor become deadly rivals and enemies ; but that was not held to invalidate the theory any more than the failure to bring off a particular experiment on a certain occasion would invalidate a law of physics. As for the national kings and

their peoples, their position was altogether subsidiary. They were supposed to be subject to the Emperor as regards one department of life and to the Pope as regards the other. Politics, in fact, was a department of theology. Our modern attitude is, of course, the opposite. We start from the immense complex of actual facts, geographical, political, and economic, and then try to find institutions that will fit in with these facts, building as it were from below. If we ever arrive at some kind of super-national government, working through a League of Nations organisation, it will be because the nations themselves require it, and not because theology tells us they ought to have it, whether they like it or not.

It seems strange that the most spiritual and unworldly of religions should have developed this amazing political and administrative system. The reason was that when Christianity spread to Rome it became Romanised. During the first three centuries of the Church the dominant influences were Greek, and we see in the Greek Christian writers the application to Christianity of Greek subtlety and Greek speculative philosophy. The Greek Church of to-day inherits this spirit. Meanwhile, in Rome, Christian thought was taking a very different turn, and it was Rome that led the West. The dominant intellectual influence at Rome was not philosophy but law. In the Latin Fathers Christian doctrine begins to acquire the rigidity of a legal system. God figures less as a Father, more as an Emperor, to whom his subjects are bound less by love than by contract. All great institutions have existed only in virtue of the fact that they have met a human need; and the Hildebrandine Papacy lived for two-and-a-half centuries because it fitted in with a conception—a perverse conception, if you will—of Christianity, that had already firmly rooted itself in the minds of believers.

Yet, though papal imperialism satisfied the popular idealism of the day, it was in profound conflict with what one may well call its realism, the daily commonplaces of

essentials to the present day. By a decree of 1058 the right of election was limited to the College of Cardinals. Since the Cardinals were themselves appointed by the Pope, such a system was well suited to secure both the independence of the Papacy and the continuity of papal policy.

For twenty-five years Hildebrand guided the Papacy, as the adviser of a succession of Popes. At last, in 1073, he became Pope himself, and took a second step far more startling than the first. This was nothing less than to apply the principle of freedom of election to the whole body of church officials throughout Christendom. By the famous Investiture Decree Gregory VII. forbade all lay authorities to make appointments within the Church. Bishops, for example, were no longer to be appointed by kings, but by their own Cathedral chapters, controlled, whenever they saw fit, by the Popes themselves and the Popes alone. This decree illustrates better than anything else the workings of the mediaeval mind. As a deduction from the principle of Divine supremacy exercised through the Pope, it was absolutely logical; as a practical solution of the problem of government in the eleventh century Church it was totally absurd. The mediaeval bishop was a great landowner, a feudal baron; he was often also a minister of state. The Pope was demanding that the kings should forfeit all control over the appointment of their most important officials. However, the wild idealism of such a pronouncement stirred religious enthusiasm to its depths, and though the Popes could never enforce the policy enshrined in the decree, the fifty years' struggle to do so was the making of the prestige of the Papacy.

The first incident in the struggle was a sufficiently decisive victory. The Emperor, Henry IV., sought to depose the Pope; the Pope excommunicated the Emperor; his subjects, glad of a religious pretext, rose against his misgovernment. Henry fled to Italy and sought his enemy, for his only escape from political ruin was through penance. For three January

days and nights (so runs the version of the story which, though not precisely true, was taken as true through seven succeeding centuries), the Emperor humbly waited in the courtyard of the castle of Canossa, where the Pope was staying, before he could gain admittance and plead for forgiveness. It was a bloodless victory, and its fame has passed into a proverb. When Bismarck, seven centuries later, had to give way to the Roman Church on a question of the control of Catholic clergy by the government of the new German Empire, it was popularly said that he had " gone to Canossa." Long after the death of Gregory VII., the Investiture controversy was ended by a compromise (Concordat of Worms, 1122) which, from the practical and modern point of view, seems to give the lay ruler all the powers over ecclesiastical appointments that he possessed before the controversy began. Elections are, it is agreed, to be " free," but they are to be held under the lay ruler's supervision (*coram rege*); the lay ruler may grant his support to the most worthy candidate; and the person elected is to receive from the lay ruler the property pertaining to his office, and fulfil the obligations arising from it. A royalist victory, thinly disguised! None the less, the controversy had served its purpose. The greatness of the Papacy was established and the precise points at issue no longer mattered.

For before this date Hildebrand's successor, Urban II., had taken the third great step in the upward course of the Papacy. He had launched the first Crusade, which had reconquered Jerusalem from the Saracen. Henceforth the Papacy has its own foreign policy. The Crusades appealed at once to the spirit of piety and to the spirit of adventure. It is no accident that the greatest crusaders were the Normans, Christianised Vikings and the first great cathedral builders. Nothing unites a country so effectively as a popular foreign war. The Crusades united Christendom under the Papacy. It was natural that the kings at first held aloof from them. No kings went on the first and greatest Crusade (1095-1100).

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Sullenly they watched the Pope playing the part of Pied Piper, and leading off the best and bravest of their subjects on an enterprise they could not openly oppose. Later, they found it prudent to fall in with a movement they could not check. The second and third Crusades are led by kings and emperors.

It was an astonishing edifice of power, run up since the death of Henry III.; but it was built on the slenderest of foundations, and it was always more brilliant than secure. The greatest Popes before Innocent III. are continually at the mercy of accident, tripped by the most trivial of political misadventures. Gregory VII. himself died an exile from Rome, driven out by the citizens. Nowhere, in fact, were the Popes less sure of obedience than in the capital city. In 1143, for example, an anti-papal Roman Republic was established, and kept a succession of Popes at bay for twelve years, until it was suppressed by the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, who restored Adrian IV.[1] to his capital. And Emperors, if offended, could be more formidable than Roman Republicans. In 1111, Henry V. carried off Pope Paschal II. as a prisoner, and only released him when he consented to abandon the Investiture Decree, a promise which Paschal recanted as soon as he was at liberty. Fifty years later Frederick Barbarossa was engaged in trying to conquer Italy. This the Pope could not allow, for if the Emperor ruled Italy, the Pope would be no more than his court chaplain, or at best his "Archbishop of Canterbury"; so the second great struggle between Papacy and Empire began. The first struggle was nominally for liberty of ecclesiastical elections, the second nominally for Italian freedom, but in both cases the aim of the Papacy was really the same, papal imperialism. Alexander III. spent most of his long pontificate (1159-1181) an exile from Rome, and even from Italy, while Frederick supported a series of anti-popes, or papal pretenders.

[1] The only English Pope, and perhaps the ablest between Gregory VII. and Innocent III.

(Alexander was, it may be remembered, in France at the time of Henry II.'s quarrel with Becket.) In so far as Alexander triumphed over Frederick in the end, he owed his victory not to any authority residing in his office, but to the military qualities of the cities of Lombardy, who overthrew Frederick's German host at Legnano in 1176. The five brief pontificates that lie between Alexander III. and Innocent III. were all troubled by riots in Rome, feudal rebellions in its neighbourhood, and the conquering activities of the new Emperor, Henry VI. It was becoming plain that spiritual authority could hardly survive such political weakness. Unless the Pope was also a powerful Italian King, he could hardly, in the Hildebrandine sense, be a Pope at all.

(iii) CHURCH AND STATE DURING THE PONTIFICATE OF INNOCENT III. (1198-1216)

Most of the statesmen studied in these essays were men of marked originality; their careers were revolutionary careers; they closed one epoch of history and opened another. Innocent III. was not of this type. He was first and foremost an administrator, a man of great ability, of enormous industry, but of little originality. He is the typical mediaeval Pope, and in studying his eighteen years pontificate (1198-1216) we are merely taking a sample of the mediaeval Papacy at its best and strongest.

Of Innocent's earlier life little need be said. Lothario di Segni dei Conti (such was his name) was born in 1160, of a family of Roman nobility; he was educated in theology and law at Paris[1] and Bologna, the two greatest universities of the age. His advance to high position was smooth and rapid. His uncle, Pope Clement III. made him a Cardinal at the age of thirty, and he was unanimously chosen as Pope

[1] It would appear that, while a student at Paris, he visited the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury (martyred about ten years before); thus, like Caesar, visiting Britain.

at the unusually early age of thirty-seven. Many Popes have displayed an incredible activity at the age of seventy or eighty. Innocent enjoyed the advantages that belong to the prime of life. In another respect also he was fortunate in the date of his election. The Emperor Henry VI., who, by the use of exceptionally brutal methods, had gone further than any of his predecessors towards achieving the complete conquest of Italy, had died during the previous year, leaving an infant son aged two. All Italy rose to throw off the German yoke, and Innocent found himself at the head of what looked like a triumphant nationalist movement. But the nationalism of the period of Innocent III. had little in common with the nationalism of the period of Victor Emanuel. Expulsion of the foreigner would not end in national union. Mediaeval Italy, like classical Greece, was a land of free cities, to which the authority of the Pope was only a little less repulsive than the authority of the German.

Compared with any of his predecessors, Innocent became in the course of his pontificate a veritable king of Italy, but even so he was a king in perpetual difficulties, continually compelled to hurl ineffective spiritual thunderbolts at unrepentant rebels. One is apt to think of the Middle Ages as a time of stained-glass attitudes and monastic calm, but nowhere perhaps in history could one find more turbulent vitality than amongst these twelfth century cities, which were one day to be glorified by the Renaissance—unending wars with continual changes of allies, complicated by faction fights within each city, all parties, even though they may ally with the Pope from time to time, being at heart incorrigibly jealous of priestly interference. Even in Rome and its neighbourhood Innocent was not sure of his mastery till the later years of his reign. Rome itself he ultimately reconciled by the lavish scale of his charities, the *panem et circenses* of his classical predecessors in a new guise. The noblest of Innocent's charitable foundations still continues its beneficent work, the great Roman Foundling and Maternity

INNOCENT III.

From Friedrich Harter's Geschichte Papst Innocenz des Dritten
(presumably copied from the Mosaic Portrait originally in
the Palazzo Conti, Rome)

Home. It is said that Innocent was inspired thereto by a dream. He dreamt that he was bidden to fish in the Tiber, and the first cast of his net brought up eighty-seven murdered infants; the second, three hundred and forty. By founding the Home he sought to save the Romans from the sin of infanticide.

The free cities were mainly in the centre and north of Italy; Lombardy, Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria. The south, the so-called Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Naples and Sicily), gave him equal anxiety. Sicily is the meeting point of all the Mediterranean civilisations. Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Greeks again (the Eastern Roman Empire), and Saracens had all ruled and left their traces there. About the time of the Norman conquest of England, other Norman adventurers had conquered Sicily, and had become the allies of Hildebrand against the Germans. The Emperor Henry VI. had married Constance, the heiress of the Norman line, and united Sicily and Southern Italy with Germany, a terrible menace to papal independence. But by his will he left the southern kingdom as a fief to the Papacy. Some historians have regarded this will as a papal forgery, but Luchaire, the best modern authority, regards it as genuine, assuming that Henry reckoned that only by this means could he hope to secure the kingdom for his infant son. If that was the Emperor's motive, it is a singular testimonial to the strength of the Papacy, from its most bitter and successful enemy. And the testimonial was deserved; the Emperors were never more than great adventurers, and the Empire rose and fell with the capacity of the wearer of its crown; the Papacy, by comparison, was a fixture, an institution. And the most rebellious of mediaeval anti-papalists, were, after all, Catholics by conviction, and reflections upon the next world often led to strange death-bed reversals of a life-long policy.

Less than two years after the publication of the Emperor's will, the widowed Empress Constance followed her husband

to the grave, leaving Innocent guardian of her son, and regent of her kingdom. Innocent wrote to the baby Frederick, aged three: "God has replaced the father you have lost by another more worthy of you, since He has appointed His vicar to be your guardian, and for your dead mother he has substituted a better, the Church." Then ensued a triangular struggle between the Pope, the German "viceroy," Markwald,[1] and the Sicilian "nationalist" party. Innocent proclaimed the war a "crusade," and also, with pleasing inconsistency, sought the help of the Sicilian Saracens. In this, as in all his struggles, he gradually gained the upper hand by sheer persistence, but the victory was never complete. For, as Frederick grew towards manhood, he developed at an astonishingly early age that obstinate independence and gift for government which were to make him, after Innocent's death, the bitterest enemy of the Papacy, and perhaps the most brilliant ruler of the Middle Ages.

In Germany, the death of Henry VI. in 1197 had been followed by anarchy and civil war. Rival emperors were elected, Philip of Swabia, the brother of Henry, and Otto of Brunswick. These represented the rival factions of Welf and Waiblingen (Guelph and Ghibelline), party labels which, like our own Whig and Tory, long survived their original purpose and meaning; Guelph came to mean Papalist and Ghibelline Imperialist, and a century later every Italian city still had its Guelphs and its Ghibellines. The poet Dante, for example, was a Ghibelline, exiled by triumphant Guelphs. Innocent supported Otto as the weaker candidate, and thus preserved his cause from an extinction which would have greatly benefited Germany. Ten years later, when Otto had been driven out of Germany, Innocent came to terms with Philip. Hardly had he done so when Philip was assassinated (1208). Once again he

[1] This German adventurer is denounced by Innocent as *ad vomitum rediens, et volens adhuc in stercore suo computrescere*; such phrases represent the official tradition in the matter of eloquence and do not imply a malodorous originality in Innocent.

transferred his support to Otto. Holder at last of an undisputed title, Otto descended into Italy with his German army, to be crowned in Rome. It is typical of this strange epoch, that, while the imperial coronation was proceeding in St. Peter's, the Roman citizens enjoyed a free fight with the German soldiery, and, as a consequence, the state banquet that was to follow the coronation, was transferred from the papal palace to the German camp outside the walls.

But it was hard for a Pope to remain at peace with an Emperor in Germany, impossible with an Emperor in Italy. In the course of the next few months, Innocent's ten years' dream of a submissive Emperor had gone the way of dreams. Otto persisted in claiming the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Two years after the coronation came the inevitable excommunication, and the Pope's ward, young Frederick, was launched on Germany as the papal claimant of the Empire. With the help of the King of France, he carried all before him. The great battle of Bouvines (1214), in which Philip Augustus of France defeated the forces of Otto and King John of England (who was Otto's uncle), marked, to all appearance, the triumph of the Pope. But Innocent had abandoned the idea of separating Germany from Sicily, which hitherto had been the corner stone of his policy. Frederick, now Emperor Frederick II., continued, it is true, to make lavish promises of submission to the patron to whom, as he never tired of saying, he owed everything; but this Frederick II. of Hohenstaufen was to prove as unscrupulous a diplomatist as that later Frederick II. of Hohenzollern, who founded the greatness of Prussia. One wonders if Innocent died undeceived. In any case, it is impossible to acquit him of unscrupulously exploiting and prolonging the divisions and miseries of Germany, and if he realised his ultimate failure here, the disappointment was not undeserved.

The ablest of Innocent's contemporaries (if one excludes

Frederick II. as belonging to the next generation) was Philip Augustus, the first of the Capet kings to establish a really strong monarchy in France. Early in Innocent's pontificate he had driven the English out of Normandy, against the Pope's wishes, and ten years later he was prepared to invade England, as the agent of papal vengeance upon King John. On the whole, it was a tradition of the Papacy to favour French kings, and allow much to them that was not allowed to other sovereigns; for France was always being needed as an ally against the prime enemy, Germany. The most remarkable incident in the relations of Innocent and Philip illustrates the Papacy in its character of censor of morals. In 1193 Philip had married Ingeborg of Denmark. It was a political match, and its purpose was to secure the use of the Danish fleet for an invasion of England during the absence of Richard Cœur de Lion. After the marriage, for reasons unknown, Philip shut up his wife in a nunnery and applied for a divorce, which was granted by the French Church. But Innocent's predecessor had overruled the French bishops and annulled the divorce. Philip then married another wife. He was excommunicated, and his kingdom placed under an interdict, which eventually induced him to separate himself from the wife whose marriage Innocent refused to recognise. This singular contest of wills was prolonged for twenty years, and at last, in 1213, Philip took back Ingeborg as his wife, but whether he did so from "religious" motives, or because he was again thinking of invading England, remains uncertain. It is notable and characteristic that, during the long struggle, Innocent was often in free and friendly intercourse with the excommunicated king on other subjects. Excommunication was, in fact, degenerating into a political manifesto, a figure of speech.

The quarrel of Innocent and King John of England, which is so conspicuous an event in our own mediaeval history was but one of a score of problems that simultaneously occupied

the energies of the Pope. The quarrel originated in the ridiculous behaviour of the monks of Canterbury, whose privilege it was, in 1207, to elect an Archbishop in succession to Hubert Walter. Knowing that King John intended to force them to elect his own nominee, John de Gray, a minority of " hot-heads " among the monks met by night and elected their own sub-prior. Thereupon the more pliant and prudent section disavowed their colleagues and elected the king's nominee. Both candidates hastened to Rome to secure the Papal " pallium," and the recognition implied thereby. Innocent, feeling, no doubt, that neither candidate was satisfactory, and that the claims of each invalidated the claims of the other, ordered the king to send a deputation of the monks to Rome with power to make a fresh election. John sent the monks, instructing them privately to elect no one but de Gray. Once in Rome, however, the deputation was persuaded to elect a distinguished Cardinal of English birth, Stephen Langton. John chose to refuse to accept Langton, and the famous five years' quarrel followed —interdict, excommunication, and the threat of French invasion and deposition. John was brought to his knees, less by the prestige of the Papacy than by the discontent his tyranny had provoked among all classes of his subjects. In 1213 he made a complete submission.

But the history of the English policy of Innocent III. does not end here. John was now the obedient servant of the Pope, and Innocent cherished the wild idea that this obedience could be extended to the undertaking of a crusade. Meanwhile the agitation that led up to the Magna Carta had begun, and, if John was the Pope's friend, then the Charter barons and Stephen Langton, their leader, were the Pope's enemies. As soon as he had signed the Charter, John requested Innocent to annul it, and Innocent was quite ready to do so. The Charter was annulled, and excommunication launched against the authors of the Charter. Langton, refusing to publish the excommunication, was suspended

from his office, and left the country. The archbishop, whom Innocent had taken such pains to force upon England, proved Anglican rather than Roman in his conception of his duties. In these, his final, dealings with England, Innocent appears at his worst, and furnishes good copy to Protestant patriots who like to think of the mediaeval Papacy as a supreme nuisance. No doubt it would be unhistorical to blame the Pope merely for his indifference to the " ancient liberties " of Englishmen enshrined in Magna Carta. The true case against him is that, having carefully selected and, at enormous cost, forced upon England an archbishop of first-rate ability and character, he refused to be guided by him in his English policy. John, it is true, had taken a vow to set forth upon a crusade, but Innocent might have known John's character by this time ; to accept such a vow from such a man at its face value, or indeed at any value at all, was a piece of credulity unworthy of a statesman.

It is impossible to follow the policy of the great Pope round all the courts of Christendom. But the relations of Rome with the minor kingdoms of the Spanish peninsula offer some curious illustrations of the way men's minds worked in that curious age when politics and religion were so inextricably intermingled. The kingdom of Portugal had been founded, at the expense of the Moors, by crusaders under papal patronage fifty years before, and the kings of Portugal paid an annual tribute to the Papacy. Innocent's contemporary, King Sancho I., refused for some years to pay this tribute. Later, he proposed to go to war and make some conquests at the expense of his neighbour, the King of Leon, and it seems to have occurred to him that the Pope's goodwill might improve the morale, as we say, of his army, for he sent an instalment of the tribute, with a letter in which he begged the Pope to take him under his protection " with all the territories he possesses, and all those which, with the aid of God, he can justly acquire in the future." Innocent closed with this dubious offer, which reminds one

of nothing so much as the prayer in Sheridan's farce, *The Critic* :—

> " Behold thy votaries submissive beg,
> That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask ;
> Assist them to accomplish all their ends,
> And sanctify whatever means they use,
> To gain them."

Another incident, this time in the kingdom of Castile, throws an odd light on the unintended results of an interdict. Innocent laid Castile under an interdict for one of the usual reasons, and the archbishop of Toledo writes to him, with many lamentations that, as the clergy are not allowed to perform their duties, the laity are refusing to pay tithe, and clerks are faced with the alternative of begging or accepting domestic service in the households of rich Jews. An interdict, in fact, was a kind of clerical strike, and, like the modern industrial strike, was a double-edged weapon. Innocent, however, disregarded the archbishop and persisted with the interdict. Ultimately the King of Castile gave way, and did what was required of him. This again is typical of our period, for the Popes generally had their way in the end in such contests of endurance. They were more resolute than most of the kings, who were, by comparison, barbarians alike in their obstinacy and their fickleness. Further, the most hardened of rebels never doubted that the Pope was, after all, the disposer of fortunes in the next world. A serious illness set the terrors of excommunication in an irresistibly formidable light.

Continuous correspondence with all the courts of Christendom was only half, perhaps less than half, of the routine work of the Papacy. There was also the Church itself, and the Church was at that date a great political institution administering its own legal system, the Canon Law, side by side with the administration of the secular states ; and Canon Law embraced not only things we should to-day relegate entirely to the sphere of religion, but also subjects

of such enormous social importance as the law of marriage. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the mediaeval Church was that it laid down a definite and logical marriage law, reducing the tropical jungle of barbarian marriage customs to something like the orderliness of an Italian garden.[1] It is easy, when one reads English history apart from its context (as is the common and most misleading practice), to regard the Church Courts as a wanton intrusion upon the sphere of the state, to regard Henry II. as wholly in the right and Becket as wholly in the wrong. But one should remember: first, that the legal system of the Church was, as a rule, greatly superior to that of the State Courts; secondly, that Henry II. was a quite exceptional mediaeval ruler, and that the excellence of his State Courts was largely due to the fact that he had had the wisdom to borrow largely from the procedure of the Church Courts. Henry's England was, in fact, the exceptional case where the Church Courts were becoming superfluous, having done their work of tutoring the lawyers of the state.

In this system of ecclesiastical law the Pope's judgment seat was the supreme Court of Appeal. No single judge could have got through the work involved, and the vast bulk of the appeals were heard by deputy, usually a deputy appointed in the country to which the case belonged. Only a small fraction of "appeals to Rome" actually came to Rome in a geographical sense. None the less, the quantity of the Pope's legal work was enormous. Much of it was discharged by correspondence. Every kind of legal point is submitted to the "oracle of God." "May invalids eat meat under doctor's orders during Lent?" "They not only may, but they must," replies the Pope. "May a bastard of saintly life be ordained a priest?" "Certainly." "Is accidental killing murder?" "Is death by misadventure suicide?" The answer is always that of charity and com-

[1] The simile is Dr. A. L. Smith's: *Church and State in the Middle Ages*, p. 97.

monsense. " *Misericordia superexaltatur iudicio :* mercy is higher than justice," he writes in one of these letters, and it is the principle underlying them all. The very absurdity, in our eyes, of many of the questions asked, shows the value of the system. It is notable that in cases involving financial disputes between lay and clerical litigants, the Pope's decision is often against " the cloth."

Another formidable group of cases arose from the rivalries within the Church, bishops *versus* their chapters, bishops *versus* abbeys within their dioceses, monks *versus* their abbots. Nor was Innocent's intervention here limited to judicial decisions. He is continually issuing bulls reforming cathedral chapters, reorganising their finances, and laying down compulsory duties for their members. This provokes opposition to Rome, and an affection for old abuses masquerades as a spirit of sturdy national independence, thus deceiving several modern historians, even if it failed to deceive contemporaries. There is perpetual outcry against the " greed " of Rome, but a vast administration such as this could not be run without a financial basis. Innocent himself was quite above suspicion of avarice, but many of his agents were not, nor were all his predecessors and successors. No doubt there were extortions and abuses. Still, on the whole, the outcry against papal " greed " was much overdone. We have the sad case of the Abbot of St. Albans, who attended the Lateran Council of 1215. After the Council was over the Abbot found that he was not allowed to leave Rome until he had made a " present " to the Pope, and, as he had not sufficient money with him, he had to borrow from Roman moneylenders. So he came home feeling very sorry for himself, and his story evoked sympathetic murmurs from our ancestors. But, after all, the " present " to the Pope was the necessary contribution to the expenses involved in organising the Council, and the Abbot of St. Albans should either have left home with a longer purse, or conducted himself less extravagantly on his journey.

The Lateran Council (1215) was the climax of Innocent's pontificate. The first General or "Ecumenical" Council of the Church had been held by the Emperor Constantine at Nicaea in 325, to deal with the Arian heresy, at the time when Christianity had first become the official religion of the Roman Empire. Seven more Councils were summoned and presided over by Emperors in the course of the next four centuries. Then, with the growing estrangement of East and West, the list of Imperial Councils reckoned as "General" by the West, comes to an end. It was left to the Papacy in its great days to revive the General Council, the Pope now taking the part previously played by the Emperor, and presiding over the Council in his palace, the Lateran, at Rome. The first Lateran Council was summoned by Calixtus II. in 1123. Innocent III.'s Lateran Council was the fourth, the last, and the greatest. It was, in fact, an extraordinary exhibition of papal absolutism. Prelates and deputies of secular princes assembled from every kingdom of Christendom, 412 bishops, 800 abbots and priors. Seventy decrees were issued, dealing with an immense variety of subjects. These decrees laid plans for a new crusade, condemned the heresy of the Albigensians (see section v), defined for the first time the doctrine of transubstantiation, added definitions to the marriage law, regulated the creation of new monastic orders, and imposed on every adult Christian the duty of making Confession at least once a year and of receiving communion every Easter Sunday. Yet the Council was all over within a month. Its work was all done by small committees under papal direction, and its three general sessions had nothing to do but listen to sermons and give a formal assent to the seventy decrees prepared for their acceptance. From whatever sources Innocent may have sought wisdom, he did not seek it from the free debates of parliamentary institutions. His Lateran Council is in strong contrast with the tumultuous freedom of the debates of Athanasians and Arians at the Council of

Nicaea nine hundred years before. It is in equally strong contrast with the vigorous parliamentarianism of the Council of Constance, which met two hundred years after to rescue the Papacy from the degradations of the Great Schism.

(iv) THE FOURTH CRUSADE

From the first day of his pontificate until the last Innocent was engaged in preaching and negotiating for a crusade to recover Jerusalem from the Saracens; he declared, no doubt sincerely, that he considered the recovery of Jerusalem the most important of human undertakings. Yet the Fourth Crusade, the only crusade that Innocent succeeded in launching in the direction of Jerusalem, was deflected to Constantinople. This crusading enthusiasm of Innocent III. was pathetic; but it was also a trifle absurd, for in truth the genuine crusading impulse was dead. It was as if the younger Pitt had declared that the great object of his statesmanship would be the recovery of the American colonies, the re-annexation of the United States. Yet it was natural that a Pope, even as shrewd a Pope as Innocent, should suffer from this obsession, for the crusades had been the very making of the Papacy as a great popular supernational power. In the great days of the First Crusade, a hundred years earlier, Pope Urban II. had raised a battle cry that rang through Europe, and the kings had seen the best and bravest of their subjects spring to arms and follow the lead of the great ecclesiastical "pied piper." That was in 1095. Once again, in 1187, when Jerusalem had been recaptured by Saladin, something like the old magic worked once again, and the three greatest sovereigns of Christendom, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Richard I. of England, and Philip Augustus of France, had led the Third Crusade against Saladin. But it had only produced disappointment and failure. And that was really the end. No doubt the crusading spirit lived on among the pious and adventurous;

but the great and powerful, who controlled armies, policy, and finance, no longer, in their inmost hearts, felt that the thing was worth while. Part of the success of the First Crusade was due to the fact that the age of maritime migrations was barely over. The First Crusade was a Christianised Viking expedition. But there were no more Vikings, and the spirit of Christian enthusiasm had to seek other channels. The great new movement of Innocent's pontificate, though he knew it not, was the Mendicant movement, whose leaders were St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic.

As soon as Innocent became Pope he set in motion all the recognised machinery of crusading propaganda. A popular preacher of the type of Urban's ally, Peter the Hermit, was discovered in Fulk of Neuilly. Collection boxes were placed in churches, indulgences were sold, ecclesiastical revenues taxed, and kings urged to levy a tribute from their lay subjects, like the Saladin tithe that had preceded the Third Crusade ten years before. All who would take the Cross were relieved of the duty of paying their debts, and those who availed themselves of this agreeable privilege, but refrained from fulfilling their vows, were threatened with excommunication. Tournaments, the favourite sport of the age, were forbidden until Jerusalem was recaptured, and merchants were enjoined not to trade with the Saracen ; but the sporting and commercial instincts made light of such edicts as these last.

The First Crusade had done much more than conquer Jerusalem. It had founded a succession of Christian colonies stretching from Antioch to the borders of Egypt. Most of this coastline was still in Christian hands, and the King of Jerusalem himself held court in Acre, the conquest of Richard Cœur de Lion. There was also a Christian kingdom of Cyprus, and the kingdom of the Armenian Christians in Cilicia. Interspersed among them all were the castles of the Templars and Hospitallers, and the trading depots of the great Italian cities, Venice, Genoa, and Pisa.

All these settlements were rent with continuous rivalries and civil wars, kingdom against kingdom, kings against their baronage, lay authorities against clerical, Templars against Hospitallers, Venetians against Genoese. And whilst they fought amongst themselves, they cultivated friendly relations with their Saracen neighbours, by trade, by marriage, and by intellectual intercourse. They had in fact become Orientalised. The Prince of Antioch, for example, made money by selling Christian slaves to his Saracen neighbours. If there was one point on which they were fairly generally agreed, it was that they disliked and dreaded the prospect of a crusade, which would interrupt all the petty local undertakings in which their interests lay. If Europe had no great desire to send a crusade to Palestine, the Christians of Palestine had still less desire to receive one

But Palestine was not the only " Eastern Question " of the Middle Ages. There was also Constantinople. Ever since the Eastern and Western halves of the old Roman Empire and the old undivided Church had drifted apart, ambitious Popes had dreamed of reuniting the Churches, and ambitious Emperors of reuniting the Imperial Crowns. We have noticed Charlemagne's negotiations with Irene. Two-and-a-half centuries after Charlemagne, when the Turks overran Asia Minor for the first time, the Eastern Emperor Michael had appealed to Hildebrand for the help of the West, and Hildebrand, in 1074, had seriously considered organising an expedition to assist in the reconquest of Asia Minor, on the condition that the Eastern Church abandoned its quarrel with the Papacy and recognised the supremacy of Rome. Again, just before the accession of Innocent, the very able and ambitious Western Emperor, Henry VI., seemed to be planning an extension of his influence eastwards, and had married his brother, Philip of Swabia, to the daughter of Isaac Angelus, the Eastern Emperor. Henry died in 1197, and Philip was now one of the rival claimants of the Western Empire. Meanwhile

Isaac and his son and heir, Alexis, had been deposed and thrown into prison by a usurper, who seized the Eastern Imperial crown as Alexis III. In 1202 the legitimate Alexis escaped from prison and fled to the court of his brother-in-law, Philip of Swabia. Thus arose a party among Innocent's enemies who plotted to use the power generated by the crusade to work a counter-revolution in Constantinople. It was easy of course to suggest that, once the counter-revolution was effected, and the rightful Alexis placed in the seat of the wrongful one, Eastern and Western Christendom would pour their united forces in an irresistible torrent upon the infidel occupants of the Holy Places.

Meanwhile, in 1201, a considerable army of crusaders, mostly French, had assembled in Venice.

The history of Venice is almost as extraordinary as its geographical position. It may claim to be the most long-lived of city-republics, for it was founded, according to tradition, by refugees fleeing before Attila in 452, and was finally extinguished as an independent state by Bonaparte in 1797. One of the greatest events in its early history was its successful resistance to the army of Pepin, son of Charlemagne, in 810. Since that event it had gradually built up a great navy and commercial interests extending all over the Eastern Mediterranean. In the tenth century, the Eastern Emperor Basil had given the Venetians large trading privileges within his empire, provided that the Venetian fleet was at the disposal of the Empire for purposes of war. Before 1200, Venetian merchants had got control of the great bulk of the trade of the Eastern Empire, and there are said to have been, at the time of the Fourth Crusade, 200,000 Venetians living in Constantinople, the wealthiest element in the population of what was then the greatest Christian city in the world. Venetian trade interests had penetrated the Eastern Empire much as, at the end of the eighteenth century, English trade interests had penetrated India. In the earlier case trade might prove a stepping-

stone to empire, as it actually did in the later case of the British in India.

Venice bargained to carry the crusaders to Palestine, or Egypt (the destination was undecided), and to provision them for one year, on condition of receiving 85,000 marks,[1] paid down in advance, and a half share of all conquests made. Whether, like Shylock, Venice hoped that her customer would fail to find the money, we do not know, but when that not unlikely result came about, she was ready with an alternative offer. The crusaders should pay their way by conquering for Venice the city of Zara, in the territory of the King of Hungary, on the opposite side of the Adriatic. Innocent publicly forbade this attack upon a Christian city, but privately he was obliged to ignore the defiance of his own orders, since the only alternative seemed to be the complete abandonment of the expedition. So Zara was taken, and crusaders and Venetians alike excommunicated. The crusaders sent to Rome a humble embassy of apology and were absolved; but Dandolo, the aged and inflexible Doge, was as indifferent to papal thunderbolts as any Henry VIII. The Venetians neither asked nor received absolution; apparently excommunication was a matter of no inconvenience to them.

Meanwhile Philip and Alexis arrived at Zara. To suggest to the Venetians an expedition to Constantinople was preaching to ready converts, and the more powerful and ambitious French crusaders were quite ready for the adventure. As for the humble and the pious, they were already drifting homewards, and the change of policy hastened their departure. Even Innocent was not prepared to make vigorous protests. To do so would only expose the fact that he had lost control of the crusade, and there was, after all, a glamour in the prospect of a union of the Eastern and Western Churches under the Papal See.

The crusaders reached Constantinople in 1203. The

[1] Perhaps about £2,000,000 in modern (1922) money.

usurper Alexis put up a very half-hearted resistance. Constantinople was occupied, and the rightful Alexis restored to his father's throne as Alexis IV. The crusaders then stayed on over the winter, and thereby overstayed their welcome. Alexis IV. became unpopular with the Greeks as a mere puppet of "the Franks," and a rising of the citizens under one Murzoufle ended in his deposition and murder. This fired the crusaders to play frankly for their own hand. They stormed the city and, after prolonged street warfare of the most horrible description, established their authority. Constantinople was plundered of its treasures, including not only works of art, but also, so the superstition of the age believed, the True Cross, the Crown of Thorns, one of Our Lord's teeth, the cup used at the Last Supper, and part of the bread broken thereat. Baldwin of Flanders was elected Emperor; the independence of the Greek Church was officially abolished, and the Venetian Morosini made Patriarch of Constantinople.

And that was the end of the crusade, for, though there was much talk, there was no serious intention, of resuming the journey to Jerusalem. Some of the crusaders returned home; others carved out for themselves principalities and baronies within the Eastern Empire. The so-called Latin Empire, founded by the crusade, lasted just over fifty years and proved the most worthless of all the larger achievements of the Middle Ages. In 1261 the Greeks, who had merely removed their seat of government to the Asiatic side of the Sea of Marmora, returned and recovered Constantinople, which they held for two more centuries, till they finally lost it to the Turks. While it lasted, the Latin Empire proved as rebellious to Papal authority as had been the crusaders who founded it, and the union of the Churches was never more than nominal. Every custom of the Latin Church seemed to the Greeks a barbarous perversity. Latin priests shaved not only their beards but the tops of their heads, while the Greek priests grew beards; Latin priests were

forbidden to marry, while Greek priests attributed special sanctity to their family life. Above all, Latin priests conducted their services in Latin, which the Greeks could not understand.

Innocent struggled indefatigably with the impossible problem that the crusaders had thrust upon him. We have a curious letter of his, written to one of the crusaders, in which he is evidently striving, with some difficulty, to persuade himself that all had been for the best. " We do not wish," he writes, " to judge rashly the means employed by Providence. It is possible that the Greeks have been punished justly for the sin they committed against God ; but it is also possible that you had not the right to punish them, and are guilty of hating your neighbour. But can one apply the term neighbour to these schismatics who rejected the love of their brethren ? Who knows but that, in making you the instruments of his just vengeance, God has given you the legitimate recompense of your efforts ? "

The only real gainers by the crusade were the excommunicated Venetians, who secured for themselves every conceivable commercial and financial privilege within the Latin Empire, as well as several important ports (such as Durazzo, where Caesar fought Pompey thirteen centuries before), and most of the islands of the Aegean. The Fourth Crusade was, in fact, a victory of Venice over Rome, of commercial imperialism over religious idealism.

But Innocent did not despair. Though the Fourth Crusade had proved a farce, the Fifth might prove a triumph. The crusade still figured as the ultimate aim of papal policy, and as such appears on the agenda of the Lateran Council.

(v) THE ALBIGENSIAN HERESY

Though he failed to land a crusade in Palestine, Innocent succeeded in launching another " crusade " of a very different character against " infidels " nearer home, the heretics of

Languedoc and Toulouse, the Mediterranean provinces of France.

At the opening of the thirteenth century this country was among the most happy and prosperous in Europe. It was a land of troubadours and gaiety and wealthy city life :—

" Dance and Provençal song and sun-burnt mirth,"

as superior in all the agreeable arts to the fierce feudal warriors of Northern France as Southern Germany is superior to Prussia. It was also a land of religious toleration. The Church was wealthy, corrupt, and despised. Synagogues and churches stood side by side, and whereas in the north of France it was a common form of speech to say " I'd rather be a Jew than do so and so," in the south popular preference altered the formula and substituted " priest " for " Jew." In such a soil heresy was bound to grow, and grow it did, springing in fact from two entirely distinct sources, which the historian must distinguish, even though the mediaeval persecutor was not concerned to do so. The two heretical sects were the Waldenses (Vaudois), claiming as their founder Peter Waldo of Lyons, and the Cathars or Albigensians (Albigeois), the second name being derived from the town of Albi with which these heretics were (wrongly, as it appears) specially associated. They called themselves Cathars, meaning " purified ".

The Waldensians were forerunners of the type of Protestant and Puritan familiar in later history. They attacked the wealth of the Church, appealed from the Church to the Bible, denied the doctrine of transubstantiation, and refused to attach special sanctity to priestly ordination. The typical pious Waldensian, like the typical Puritan, was a devout individualist, basing his spiritual life upon his own prayerful study of the Scriptures. Catharism, on the other hand, was not a Protestant sect of Christianity but a rival non-Christian religion, carried to this congenial soil by means of the trade routes from far eastern sources. It presents most of the

typical features of oriental religion. The Cathars believed that this world and all physical life within it are essentially evil, being created and ruled by the Devil. The soul alone is the work of God ; it is enclosed in the prison-house of the flesh, from which it can at death escape to God by means of sacramental rites. Such a religion must, if accepted and acted upon, undermine all morality and all effort for progress. If the body is evil, why try to keep it pure ? If earth is hell, why waste time trying to improve it ? Yet it would be as great a mistake to suppose that the ordinary Albigensian lived down to the level of Catharism as that the ordinary Christian lived up to the level of Christianity. Catharism, too, did not reach the south of France in a pure state. It was so hopelessly entangled with Christian doctrines and Christian observances as to become in fact a kind of Christian heresy after all. The distinguishing feature of the Cathars was the reverence they paid to their own " Holy Men," the privileged members fully initiated into the secrets of eternal life. These Holy Men seem to have deserved the reverence they received, and to have presented a marked contrast to the average Christian bishop of the day.

But there were thousands in all ranks of life who cared little or nothing for the Protestant doctrines and Bible worship of the Waldenses, or for the oriental theology of the Cathars, but none the less thoroughly sympathised with them in their contempt for the Church. In its widespread and popular form, the heresy of Southern France was simply anti-clericalism, and the heretics were probably on the average neither better nor worse than their neighbours in matters of morality.

The Provençal heresies had been growing for over a hundred years. The Third Lateran Council of 1179 had condemned them, but without result. Innocent felt at once that here was one of those problems which a Pope such as he could not possibly ignore. But he was by no means a persecutor by temperament ; he was much too sound a

statesman for that. He saw that the real cause of the popularity of heresy was the corruption within the Church, and, while issuing an edict for persecution which he did not intend at once to enforce, he threw all his energy into a campaign of preaching and reform. The most remarkable of the preachers enlisted in his campaign was the Spaniard, Dominic, afterwards the founder of the Dominican order of Friars, whose ideals were, indeed, not so very far from those of the Waldensian section of the heretics themselves, purity of life and contempt of worldly wealth. Innocent went further and, by founding a new religious order of "Humiliés" or "Poor Catholics," sought to provide a bridge whereby heretics could preserve the manner of life they valued, while returning within the orthodox fold. But all these measures were defeated by the local leaders of the Church, who persisted in their worldly ways and frustrated the papal agents by every device in their power. Innocent failed equally to enlist the support of Raymond, Count of Toulouse, whose dominions covered most of the heretical area. At last, in 1207, the murder of a papal legate by some too zealous adherents of Raymond drove Innocent back upon worse methods, and he proclaimed a crusade for the extirpation of heresy.

The crusade was virtually an invitation to the baronage of Northern France to pillage the wealthy cities of the South. Innocent, no doubt, believed that he would be able to control the activities of his crusaders, but he found himself quite unable to do so. A host of brigands and murderers, whose performances it would be unprofitable to relate, descended upon Languedoc. Their operations extend beyond the end of Innocent's pontificate. The military leader of the crusaders was Simon de Montfort, father of the English hero of parliamentary fame; he was a cruel and vigorous man, intoxicated, no doubt, with a genuine zeal for orthodoxy, but also well aware of his own prospects of becoming, by means of the crusade, a great landowner and ruler in Southern

France. The persecution lasted in all about a hundred years. When it finished there were no heretics left; and with the heretics had perished also the gay and kindly culture of old Languedoc. "They made a solitude and called it peace."

Two other results had been achieved. The King of France, ruling from Paris, was for the first time master of his south-eastern provinces; and a terrible precedent had been set to guide Catholic rulers of a later day in their treatment of those who rejected the Christianity of Rome.

(vi) THE COLLAPSE OF THE PAPAL IDEAL

Innocent III. has the reputation of having been the most powerful of all the Popes, but the impression left by a study of his pontificate is not an impression of serene and triumphant despotism; it is rather the impression of an authority continually defied, of an immense energy and dignity supporting pretensions too enormous for even such energy and such dignity to sustain. In this impression of incompleteness, of ultimate failure, Innocent differs less from his contemporary monarchs than both differ from modern governments. The first task of all governments is to maintain order, to establish machinery which would allow the ordinary man to go safely about his business in the day and to sleep quietly by night. To-day, in England at any rate, the forces that make for order are so much stronger than the forces that make for anarchy that we only occasionally remember by what long and painful efforts this triumph of the political art has been achieved. In the middle ages no government fully achieved it, and when we read of Innocent defied by kings and crusaders, we must remember that kings, even the greatest kings of France and Germany, were defied by their barons and their churchmen in the same way. No continental king of that age had anything like the mastery over his subjects that Henry II. had over the English; and

even Henry II. had to humble himself at the tomb of Becket, and completely failed to control his continental dominions.

In the thirteenth century, in fact, the first task of government, the maintenance of order, was unachieved, and it was still an open question which was the best way to achieve it. One plan was the creation of compact, independent, secular states under the rule of hereditary despots. That was the plan whereby the successful assertion of order was finally secured—the road leading through Henry VIII. and Louis XIV. Such a plan would destroy the universality of the Christian commonwealth; it would cut the various provinces of the Church from their centre, and reduce these localised churches to adopt a subservient attitude towards national and patriotic ideals. In fact patriotism would supersede Christianity as the popular religion.

The Papacy stood for an alternative plan, a plan which was rejected. This plan assumed the continuance, the reassertion with ever-increasing vigour, of the old Roman Imperial tradition. The Pope was to be the true Christian Emperor, Innocent the heir of Augustus. The national kingdoms were but Roman provinces, with hereditary governors whose insubordination would diminish as they came to learn what civilisation really meant. It was ever the boast of Rome to tame the proud and spare the humble, *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*. Canon Law and Christian Charity, these were the principles on which alone a civilised commonwealth could be built; and both were of Rome. Such was the Papal-Imperial programme. To many of the best minds of the Middle Ages it seemed not so much the best but the only solution of the problem of civilised government, and though they proved mistaken, though a universal orthodoxy regulated by an imperial ecclesiastic proved an impossible system, it cannot be denied that they grasped certain aspects of the problem that were overlooked by the ages intervening between themselves and us, and that the twentieth century has to take up again on

new lines the problem they failed to solve and which their successors ignored. For mere nationalism is no solution. We know that in 1923, even if we did not know it in 1913.

The papal ideal was defeated, it seems, because it ignored legitimate national aspirations. The kings were right in seeking to make themselves strong, for out of strength grows order, and out of order liberty. Parliament itself is the child of anti-papalism. The Popes dreaded strong monarchies. Their imperial ambitions would not allow them to co-operate with strong kings, and strong kings could not admit papal authority as an equal, much less as a superior within their kingdoms. No mediaeval ruler recognised this more clearly than the Emperor Frederick II., whose reign fills the thirty-four years following the death of Innocent III. He had a genius for orderly administration, and to him the Papacy was the enemy of order. Innocent's successors set themselves to destroy him, and to do so they strained and abused to the uttermost the financial resources of the Papacy. The Papacy became militarised, and lost sight of the great missionary purpose for which the Church existed. There were signs of this change already appearing under Innocent III. In Innocent IV. (1243-1254) the transformation was complete. Innocent IV. was the "consummate man of business," the "cold, unswerving materialist,"[1] the typical Prussian of the Bismarckian school, sitting in the seat of the Apostle. The struggle of Papacy and Empire was one of those struggles in which both antagonists are defeated. The Empire was broken in pieces, and Germany remained disunited until the nineteenth century, but the Papacy had lost its moral prestige. In striving to gain all the kingdoms of the world, it had lost its own soul.

Fifty years after Innocent IV., a hundred years after Innocent III., another Pope, Boniface VIII., sought to revive the highest claims of the Papacy. He was met by

[1] These phrases are from A. L. Smith's *Church and State in the Middle Ages*.

the solid resistance of the English and French nations, under two of their most powerful and capable sovereigns, Edward I. and Philip IV., and was decisively defeated. In 1305, two years after his death, the French king lured the Papacy from Rome to Avignon. Seventy-three years of " Captivity " at Avignon (1305-1378) were followed by thirty-seven years of Schism (1378-1415), rival Popes at Rome and Avignon, each anathematising the other as the agent of the devil. The rule of Rome, built up by the sturdy soldiers of the Senate, preserved by the Caesars, and inherited by the Popes, was ended at last and for ever.

V

RICHELIEU (1585-1642)

(i) THE NEW NATIONALISM AND THE STRIFE OF CREEDS

When we pass from the subjects of the four preceding studies to Richelieu, we are conscious of entering a narrower sphere of interests. The work of Pericles, of Caesar, of Charlemagne, and of Innocent III., is part of the common heritage of Europe and of the European peoples beyond the seas. We are all heirs of Greece and of Rome. But during the four centuries that lie between Innocent III. and Richelieu the old federal bonds, which had held the European peoples together, were snapped. The idea of a united "Christendom" is replaced by the idea of a balance of power between independent nations and between rival Christian churches. The various features of this revolution in political and religious ideas and political and religious institutions are commonly comprehended, along with much else, under the two terms, Renaissance and Reformation. In order to bridge the gap between Innocent III. and Richelieu, it is necessary to have a general notion of what these two terms imply.

The Renaissance in its widest sense may be defined as a re-birth or re-assertion of "worldliness," in the best sense of that word, a realisation of the fact that this world is, after all, a glorious and fascinating place to live in, that life is full of splendid opportunities, and that man is a wonderful creature, capable of realising those opportunities in himself.

" What a piece of work is man ! " says the voice of the Renaissance speaking through Hamlet, " How noble in reason ! how infinite in faculty ! in form and moving how express and admirable ! in action how like an angel ! in apprehension how like a god ! the beauty of the world ! the paragon of animals ! " It was natural that such a movement should find its purest expression in the disinterested quest of beauty and of truth, in the art of the great Italian painters, in the plays of Shakespeare, in the scientific researches of Galileo, in the work of Erasmus, who sought to purify Christianity from the degrading superstitions that had encrusted it, by turning upon them the antiseptic rays of pure intelligence. But our subject is the narrower field of statesmanship, and from that point of view the most important man of the Renaissance is Machiavelli.

Machiavelli (1469-1527) was a Florentine politician. In 1513 he was exiled and disgraced, as a result of one of the well-nigh countless revolutions of his native city, and during his banishment he composed the short treatise called " The Prince," which must always be reckoned one of the great landmarks in the history of political thought. Like all the men of the Renaissance, Machiavelli entertained for the Greek and Roman classics a reverence such as the Christian reserves for his Bible, and " The Prince " was, in part at any rate, the result of Machiavelli's studies in Livy's History of the Growth of the Roman Republic. Just as the Christian traces from a study of the Bible the laws of the relationship of God and man, so, it occurred to Machiavelli, one could deduce from a study of the history of the most successful of political institutions, the Roman Republic, the laws of political success and failure. " The Prince " is a manual for statesmen, based on the study of Livy, reinforced, no doubt, by personal observation and experience. The tendency of such a book can easily be foreseen. In Livy there is no Christianity and there is no Pope, and Machiavelli simply ignores the grand conception of an overruling Papacy, representing the will

of God and purporting to uphold Christian principles in politics. To him it is a dream and a delusion. He goes further, and explicitly attacks the claim of Christianity to influence politics. By glorifying humility, he says, and pointing to a future life, it has simply made men weak. Politics is to be emancipated from theology; it is also emancipated from morality. We are left with "the State" as an end in itself. It does not much matter how the state is governed, whether by a monarch or a republican constitution, but above all things the government must be strong and resolute. The secret of strength is popularity, but it does not matter whether you gain your popularity by fair means or foul, provided you gain it. Law is better than force, but if law will not serve, the ruler must use force. And the one aim of the ruler should be the power of the state he rules, and such power can only be gained at the expense of his neighbours. Machiavelli introduced the principle of unlimited competition into the theory of international relations. No wonder Bacon said that "Machiavelli wrote what men do, not what they ought to do." [1]

The chief contribution, therefore, of the Renaissance to political thought was to emancipate national ambition from the claims of a common duty to Christian neighbours and to Christian principles. Four years after Machiavelli wrote "The Prince," Luther raised the standard of religious revolt in Germany (1517). Luther, of course, did not intend to

[1] The Machiavellian theory received two notable extensions in the nineteenth century. First, the earlier political economists, *e.g.* Ricardo, whose treatise was published in 1817, advocated unlimited freedom for individuals in the pursuit of wealth, the unfettered action of the forces of Supply and Demand, as the best thing in the long run for all concerned. Secondly, the popularisation of the Darwinian theory of Evolution as resulting from the "survival of the fittest" led, by a gross confusion of "fittest" with "best," to the theory associated with Nietzsche, that all human kindliness to the weak, all Christian morality in fact, was criminal folly because it impeded the development of the strong and delayed the arrival of the "superman." The political doctrines popular in Prussia before the war were a curious and confused mixture of Machiavelli's non-moral politics, and Nietzche's misapplication of Darwinism to human society.

create a new church in rivalry with the old. He desired to reform the old. The Reformation, in fact, is called by the name of what it intended, not of what it accomplished. The Lutheran movement was, in intention, simply a moral and religious protest against the evil practices of the priesthood, and the immoral superstitions encouraged by the officials of the Church because they provided revenue, the sale of indulgences, for example, based on the superstition that the penalties of sin could be remitted for money. When the Lutherans found themselves driven into rebellion, not merely against the corruptions of the Church, but against the Church itself, they were compelled to discover a new ecclesiastical organisation for themselves, and, to their eternal loss, fell back upon the easy plan of entrusting the government of the new churches to the secular rulers of the states. Thus the Lutheran churches in Germany, and, under rather different circumstances, the reformed church in England, became departments of state, and kings began to discover that they ruled by Divine Right.

But the Lutheran movement was only the first act of the Reformation drama. For Luther did more than tear away nearly half western Christendom from allegiance to Rome ; he frightened Rome into reforming her own organisation and outlook. This anti-Lutheran movement is called the Counter Reformation. Its birth may be dated in 1540, when Pope Paul III. enrolled the Spaniard, Ignatius Loyola, and his nine disciples, in a new and unique religious order, and thus founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). Its coming of age may be placed in 1563, when the Council of Trent completed its sittings, after having reformulated Catholic dogma and anathematised the Protestants. The Counter Reformation was Spanish in origin and character, and found its foremost champion in Philip II. of Spain. Meanwhile, the Protestants of Geneva, led by Calvin, had, during the same years as covered the growth of the Counter Reformation, discovered a form of organisation, Presbyterian self-government, well

suited to maintain the ardour and the purity of their faith ; and Calvinism, or Puritanism, spread into France, Holland, Scotland, and, by degrees, into England. Thus began, about 1560, the period of devastating religious wars and persecutions, the real combatants being, not the old decayed Romanism and German Lutheranism, but the reformed Spanish faith that had captured Rome and the reformed Genevan faith based on Bible-reading and self-government.

It would be an absurd error to suppose that the combatants were inspired to fight solely by their theological differences. Religion and politics were inextricably entangled. In Holland, Calvinism reinforced a nationalist movement ; in England it reinforced a movement for Parliamentary control ; in France it reinforced a movement for feudal and municipal independence. But in every country where rival creeds jostled one another side by side, national patriotism was submerged. The Presbyterian Scots forgot their old hatred of England in their new hatred of their Catholic queen. The French Huguenots were prepared to call in English and German help against a Catholic king, and the French Catholics to call in Spanish help against a Huguenot king. Loyola and Calvin between them seemed to have ruined the prospects of the Machiavellian " Prince."

No country illustrates the adventures of national monarchy in this period so well as France, and the importance of Richelieu in history lies in the fact that his career illustrates, better than that of any other statesman, the triumph of nationalism and the principles of Machiavelli over the forces that animated the religious wars. It remains to sketch the history of France from the time of Philip Augustus, the contemporary of Innocent III., down to the period of Richelieu.

After Philip Augustus, France and the French monarchy enjoyed a century of considerable prosperity. St. Louis IX. (1220-1270) was in many respects the noblest of mediaeval kings ; in him, at any rate, piety was not a by-product of political incompetence. Philip IV. (1284-1315), a cruel but

efficient king, was the author of the downfall of the Papacy and its transference to Avignon. Shortly afterwards, however, the direct line of the Capets died out, and with the accession of the Valois came the appalling catastrophes of the Hundred Years War (1340-1453). Hope was reborn with Jeanne Darc (1429), and Louis XI. (1461-1483) accomplished for France more or less what Henry VII., a little later, accomplished for England, the establishment of a strong popular monarchy and the destruction of the most dangerous and independent of his feudal nobility. There seems, however, a kind of natural law of political human nature which impels a nation, once it has achieved a certain degree of unity and national self-consciousness, to fall upon the most vulnerable of its neighbours. In 1494 Charles VIII. invaded Italy, in pursuance of fantastic claims to the kingdom of Naples, and for the next sixty-five years (1494-1559) the French kings were involved in fruitless wars against rival claimants of Italian territory, Spain and Austria, united for a large part of the time under the Emperor Charles V.—wars fought partly in Italy and partly along the north-east frontier of France. At the end of this enormous wasted effort, France was as weak as she had been at the end of the Hundred Years War. Moreover, the wars of religion were just about to begin.

The rivalry of Protestant and Catholic presented a problem which national statesmen might attempt to solve in a variety of different ways. One solution, which time has proved to be the only one, would be complete toleration ; but that was unendurable to the sixteenth-century mind. Not only were the religious enthusiasts on both sides wholly unwilling to leave each other in peace, but even a worldly Machiavellian, who was prepared to say in his heart, " A plague on both your factions," could not believe that those who differed in religion from their rulers could be truly loyal subjects. The state, in fact, took over from the mediaeval Church the ideal of religious uniformity. In a few countries, such as Spain,

and (in a less degree) Scotland, one or other creed was so strong as to establish its supremacy and virtually extirpate its opponents. In England, where monarchy was stronger and religious passion less intense than anywhere on the continent, Elizabeth and her statesmen devised a national compromise, part Protestant and part Catholic, and sought to bring all parties to accept it. The Anglican settlement was not wholly successful, but it was successful enough to keep the country clear of religious civil war for eighty years. Charles V. had tried to do the same thing in Germany a few years earlier, but Germany was the least united of the great nations and his scheme was a failure. So, by the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555, each German prince was allowed to choose his own religion, and to compel, so far as he felt inclined, his own subjects to conform to it; *cuius regio, eius religio*, the ruler chooses the religion. Thus the Reformation came to complete the ruin of German national unity. And there was only too good reason to fear that the same thing would happen in France.

The religious wars struck the French monarchy at an unfortunate moment. Henry II., whose persecution of the Huguenots had only increased their vigour, was killed in a tournament in 1559, leaving an unpopular Italian widow, Catherine de Médicis, and four extremely unpromising sons, unhealthy in body, diseased in mind, and perverted in morals. Such was the unhappy family that represented the French crown from 1559 to 1589, by which date all five were dead without heirs. Throughout this thirty years the Monarchy attempted very unsuccessfully to steer a middle course, experimenting in various forms of partial toleration, and buffeted and bullied by both religious parties in turn. Huguenotism found its strength in the bourgeoisie of the southern towns and in a large section of the nobility, and its leaders in Coligny and Navarre. The Counter Reformation found its strength in the city of Paris, and its leaders in the great family of the Guises from Lorraine.

France could find no solution till the wretched Valois line was extinct. Thereafter the legitimate king was Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot by profession but a Machiavellian at heart, and a man whose gifts well fitted him to win that popularity which Machiavelli had called the secret of power. Against him were arrayed all the forces of the Counter Reformation, backed by the national enemy, Spain. Henry played his cards with skill, timed to a nicety his " conversion " to the faith of the majority of his subjects, forgave all his enemies that were willing to be forgiven, and thus secured a position from which he could brand the rest as friends of Spain and enemies of France. Having conceded so much to the Catholics by his conversion, he was able to secure a concession to the Protestants in the celebrated Edict of Nantes (1598). The Huguenots were allowed to constitute themselves a kind of self-governing community within the borders of France, and they were to be allowed to garrison eight fortresses with their own troops, as a guarantee of the settlement. They were allowed freedom of conscience, and freedom of worship in nearly all the towns of France, except within five miles of Paris ; they were to enjoy full legal and educational rights, and their ministers were to have the same privileges in matter of exemptions from taxation as the *curés* of the Catholic Church.

The treaty with Spain and the Edict of Nantes ended the French Wars of Religion in 1598, and twelve years of peace followed, during which France slowly recovered from her wounds under the careful treatment of Henry IV. and his minister, Sully. Then in 1610 Henry was assassinated by a Romanist fanatic, and on the doctor's removal, the patient suffered a fresh relapse (1610-1624) ; more civil broils between the Queen Mother, Marie de Médicis, and her Italian favourites, and the young king, Louis XIII., and his favourites. During these years befell the last meeting, before the French Revolution, of the French Estates General. During these years, also, Richelieu entered politics.

(ii) THE CREATION OF THE BOURBON DESPOTISM

Richelieu was born in 1585, the son of a Poitevin noble of ancient but not conspicuous lineage, who had fought in support of the last Valois, Henry III., against his many enemies, and had afterwards died on active service, on the side of Henry of Navarre, when Richelieu was five years old. His mother, the daughter of a Parisian lawyer, was left in great poverty. Richelieu was, however, well educated and intended for a military career, an intention with which Destiny interfered in a somewhat ludicrous manner. One property the family possessed, the right to the bishopric of Luçon, which Henry III. had conferred on the Richelieus in gratitude for the father's military services. For this sinecure the future statesman's elder brother was intended, but, proving too pious, he entered a monastery. So the future statesman had to abandon the career of arms, and take up the family bishopric at the age of twenty-one. Such were then the ways of the Catholic Church in France.

It may well be that Richelieu's early military training implanted in him that taste for military operations which he showed so often in his later career. Like Bismarck, with whom he had, indeed, so much else in common, he was never happier than on a campaign, and, unlike Bismarck, he was given several opportunities, notably at the siege of La Rochelle, of proving that he possessed the qualities of a good general. In religion, on the other hand, he never appears to have taken more than a formal interest. In the years before he became ruler of France he wrote a few theological tracts, but their merits were small and their purpose apparently self-advertisement.

For six years (1608-1614) Richelieu devoted himself strenuously to the duties of his small provincial see ; it was his nature to be strenuous, and he was too poor to fly at higher game. The meeting of the Estates General in 1614 launched him on his wider career—which was indeed the

only important result of that futile assemblage. Richelieu was elected one of the representatives of the Clerical Estate, and his skill in negotiation attracted the attention of the Queen Mother, who was then misgoverning France. He became one of her chief advisers, and played his part well in the complicated and wholly unimportant quarrels of the Queen Mother and the young king, which filled the next ten years (1614-1624). In the course of these activities he was rewarded by the Pope with a Cardinal's hat, a singularly incongruous headgear for the statesman who was to do more than any other to banish religious motives from politics. Suffice it to say that when the Queen Mother was (temporarily) reconciled to the King, Richelieu's services were transferred from mother to son, and in 1624, at the age of thirty-nine, he became the chief minister of the King of France by convicting his predecessor at that post of corruption.

Then began a singular partnership of eighteen years' duration, terminated only by the Minister's death, which finds two curious parallels in the nineteenth century—Cavour directing the policy of King Victor Emmanuel and achieving the union of Italy, and Bismarck directing the policy of William of Prussia and achieving the union of Germany. In all three cases we have a king of solid but far from brilliant gifts securing the services of a great minister, and showing his own wisdom in making that minister his master and guide, and supporting him loyally against every kind of opposition. It is perhaps worth noting that, while Richelieu was ruling France, a statesman of similar ideas was seeking in vain to secure a like position in England. But Charles I. was no Louis XIII.; he preferred the advice of his wife and his courtiers, and Strafford's career is a record of failure.

Louis XIII. was a rather queer and unattractive person, dull, cold, and undemonstrative; he was most of his life an invalid. There is no trace in his relations with his minister

RICHELIEU

From an Engraving by B. Picart after Campaigne

of that genuine friendship which humanised the relations of Bismarck with William I. of Prussia. But he was clearly a man of uncommon pertinacity. Not all the hysterics of the Queen Mother, nor the sullen hostility of the Queen Consort, nor the conspiratorial antics of Gaston, the King's brother and heir-presumptive, could wean Louis from the minister of his choice. Manifold were their hopes, and invariable their disappointments. For Louis had a disconcerting trick of appearing to be impressed by them. He was a man of few words, and could seldom rally his debating powers to meet the cajoleries and threats of his women-folk. He feigned acquiescence in order to get rid of them, and they departed rejoicing; but when they returned again, it was all as though they had never been. One such occasion is known in history as "The Day of Dupes"; but, indeed, there were many "Days of Dupes" for Richelieu's enemies.

The disease from which French government suffered, when Richelieu took control, was easy to diagnose though hard to cure. It was simply weakness, and the weakness manifested itself by three symptoms, the turbulence of the nobles, the turbulence of the Huguenots, and the interferences of Spain. All three sources of trouble were closely connected, for the turbulent element in Huguenotism was the Huguenot nobility, and the interferences of Spain took the form of support of feudal rebellions. Richelieu's task, in fact, was to bring feudal power, and with it feudal lawlessness, to an end. We may consider first the case of the Huguenots, for that business was finally settled within the first five years of the ministry, and then proceed to the suppression of feudalism untinctured and undisguised by religious nonconformity. The Spanish problem and, with it, the part played by France in the Thirty Years War will be left to the next section of this essay.

Henry IV.'s Edict of Nantes (1598) had been invaluable in that it called a halt in the suicidal wars of religion, but it

had not solved the problem of national unity, for it gave the Huguenots military privileges which set them apart from other subjects of the French crown. This arrangement was probably absolutely unavoidable at the time, for religious passion was so strong that Huguenot toleration would not have been secured had not the religious minority been given the means of defending itself. None the less, the "guarantee" towns garrisoned by the Huguenot forces were a perpetual advertisement of the weakness of the central government, a perpetual cause of aggravation to Catholic neighbours, and a perpetual temptation to insubordination for the Huguenots themselves. During the fourteen troubled years between the death of Henry IV. and the accession of Richelieu to power, all parties had been more or less to blame; the government had encroached upon the statutory rights of the Huguenots, and the Huguenots had risen in rebellion, as a result of which they had been forced to accept a reduction of their fortified cities from eight to two.

"So long as the Huguenots have a foothold in France," wrote Richelieu in 1625, "the King will never be master at home, nor able to undertake any glorious action abroad." The events of the first year of the ministry had quickly proved this to be the truth. Richelieu had at once set on foot his ambitious foreign policy; he was in alliance with Denmark, Holland, and England, whose future king, Charles I., was about to marry Louis XIII.'s sister, Henrietta Maria. These allies were to attack the allied powers of Spain and Austria in Germany, while France intervened to cut their communications in Italy. As soon as the campaign was well launched, the Huguenots rose under Soubise and Rohan, great feudal nobles of the south. Realising that control at home must precede an ambitious foreign policy, Richelieu patched up a truce with Spain, left his allies to shift for themselves, rounded upon the rebels, and reduced them to submission. For the moment their two guarantee towns were restored

to them, but the matter could not end there, and the folly of the English minister, Buckingham, soon precipitated a fresh crisis.

The English marriage alliance had led to a quarrel upon the rights of Henrietta Maria's attendants to Catholic worship in England, and now the English Puritan parliament saw their late ally, who had promised to help them against Catholic Spain, turning not only his own arms, but also their own fleet, loaned by Buckingham for the purpose, against their fellow Protestants in France. Buckingham was more of a sportsman than a statesman, and sought military adventure wherever he could find it. Having failed to imitate the Elizabethans by sacking Cadiz, he now sought to organise a Huguenot rebellion with English support at Rochelle. It is fair to say that the great bulk of middle-class Huguenots were extremely reluctant to rise, but they allowed their feudal leaders to lure them to ruin. La Rochelle rose, and Richelieu undertook one of the great sieges of history. The English fleet failed to break the mole Richelieu had thrown across the harbour, and, after a year of heroic resistance, the Huguenot capital was starved into surrender in October, 1628.

That was the end of Huguenotism as a political and military power, for the forces of the Huguenot nobles outside Rochelle were easily vanquished, in spite of the fact that they formed a sinister and fantastic alliance with Spain for the creation of an independent kingdom in Southern France. But Richelieu was entirely free from bigotry, and had no desire to interfere with the Huguenot religion. All the political and military privileges were abolished, and all the religious privileges confirmed. From that date onwards the Huguenots, who had been the most troublesome, became the most valuable, of French citizens. That strength of character, which can never be lacking in those who persist in upholding an unpopular faith, was turned into fruitful channels, and the Huguenots quickly proved themselves to

excel most of their neighbours in vigorous and intelligent industry. At last a great nation found itself strong enough and wise enough to maintain without disaster the rule of toleration. How long would such an experiment last? It would have lasted until the present day, had there not come a king strong enough and stupid enough to abolish it. Two generations later, the Counter Reformation, in its worst and narrowest form, captivated the mind of Louis XIV. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, inflicted upon France a greater injury than any defeat in battle. It drove out into the lands of her Protestant rivals a hundred thousand of the best workers in Europe, and destroyed the finest of Richelieu's achievements.

But most of the nobles were not Huguenots, and all of them, from the King's brother, Gaston of Orleans, downwards, resented the authority of the crown and the very existence of Richelieu, who made that authority felt as it had never been felt before. Entrenched in his castle, the great noble felt himself a petty sovereign, a law unto himself, and he conducted his own petty warfare in the guise of duelling. That duelling was the curse of France is plain from the fact that four thousand persons are said to have been killed in duels in the year 1607. In 1626 an edict ordered the destruction of all fortified private castles, and made duelling a capital offence. In the next year a Montmorency, a member, that is, of one of the very greatest families in France, was arrested, tried, and executed, for fighting a duel in the streets of Paris.

So war was declared between the crown and feudalism. The weapons of feudalism were a monotonous series of rebellions and assassination plots, in many of which the Queen herself, the Queen Mother, and the King's brother were implicated. The weapons of Richelieu were sleepless vigilance, skilled espionage, and ruthless enforcement of the law. The Queen Mother was driven from France to end her days in exile, and twenty-six members of the highest aristocracy were brought to the scaffold, including five dukes

and one of the king's favourite courtiers. All of them richly deserved it. Other aspects of the system, the use of the Bastille for the imprisonment of suspects, the wide extension of the law of treason until it came to include such offences as " giving bad advice to the King's brother," are less easily defended, but perhaps no other method would have served the purpose. Richelieu, at any rate, was wholly disinterested. On his death bed, his confessor asked him whether he forgave his enemies. " I have no enemies," he replied, " but those of the King and the State," and these, he no doubt meant to imply, it was no part of his religion to forgive.

But, in a great statesman's mind, destruction is only a preliminary to construction. The suppression of plots and plotters was no more than an interruption in the task of building up a wholly new system of local government for France. Richelieu transferred the duties of local government from the hereditary nobility to a middle-class civil service. Over each province was set an *Intendant*, in whose hands were placed the control of the whole financial, judicial, and police administration of the province. The *Intendants* were subject to a close supervision from Paris, and it was the rule that they should never be nobles, and should never be natives of the province they governed.

This civil service governed France from the time of Richelieu to the French Revolution. It was restored under new names by Napoleon, and has lasted in its essential features to the present day. But in one respect Richelieu failed to carry his work through to its logical conclusion. The nobles were deprived of their powers, but they retained their financial privileges. They ceased to be tyrants, but in ceasing to be tyrants they became parasites upon French society. The overthrow of this extraordinary system of pay without work, privilege without power, was the main motive of the French Revolution.

Richelieu might have been less tolerant of this anomaly if he had given more care to the study of financial problems,

of the news of Richelieu's death, in an epigram which may also serve as an epitaph. " If there is a God," said this great authority, " he will pay dearly for his conduct ; but if there is no God, then he was truly an admirable man."

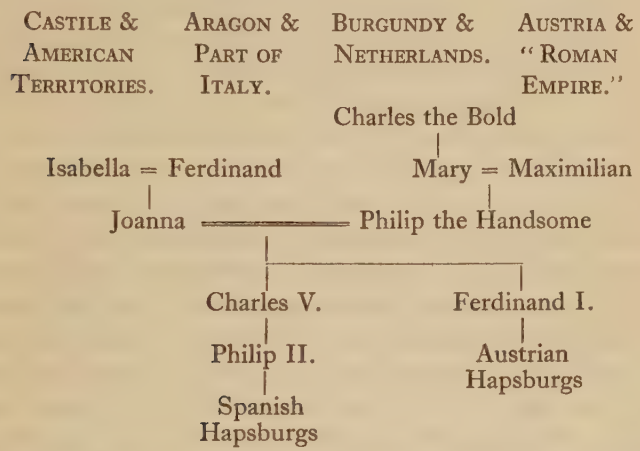
(iii) FRANCE AND THE THIRTY YEARS WAR

When one finds that Spain was the chief enemy of France in the first half of the seventeenth century, one might well be surprised until one had heard more, for nature seems to have provided, in the Pyrenees, a perfectly satisfactory frontier wall between the two countries. But Spain in the seventeenth century meant much more than the Spanish peninsula, and Spanish territories lay most of the way along the exposed north-eastern frontier of France, stretching like the German armies of the Great War, from the Straits of Dover to Switzerland, with a gap in the middle held by Spain's perpetual ally, the House of Austria.

The explanation of this is to be found in the genealogies of a century or more earlier. In the sixteenth century the royal families of Europe suffered from a plague of heiresses, brotherless women who inherited estates, married rulers of other estates and thereby created unnatural combinations of territories for the benefit of the offspring of the marriage. The last great Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold (died 1477), began the process by leaving a solitary daughter, Mary, whose hand was won by the Hapsburg Emperor Maximilian. The Dukes of Burgundy were the junior line of the Valois family, and their estates were largely (though not wholly) carved out of France ; thus French territory was transferred by marriage to Austria, modern Belgium and part of what is now French Flanders to the south of it, and the Free County (Franche Comté) of Burgundy, lying north-west of Switzerland and south-west of Alsace and Lorraine.

Maximilian had a son and heir, Philip the Handsome, who captured another heiress, Joanna, the elder daughter

of Ferdinand of Aragon, who, by marrying the heiress of Castile, had created the kingdom of Spain. Thus the son of Philip and Joanna, Charles V., inherited the combined estates of Spain, Austria and Burgundy. On his death he divided his unwieldy empire, his brother Ferdinand receiving Austria and the title of Emperor, and his son Philip II. (of the Armada) receiving Spain and the Burgundian territories. This brought Spanish territory southwards, beyond the cities of Arras and Cambrai, to within a hundred miles of Paris. The Hapsburg frontier, in fact, came rather further down into modern France than did the *western* section of the German line in the Great War.



Another result of these marriages was the close and continuous alliance of the two branches of the house of Hapsburg ruling in Spain and Austria. Thus it happened that Richelieu's duel with Spain was inextricably mixed up with the great German war of religion, known as the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), and one cannot understand Richelieu's foreign policy without a general idea of the circumstances of that war.

Every country in the Middle Ages was the arena of a more or less continuous struggle between monarchy and feudalism,

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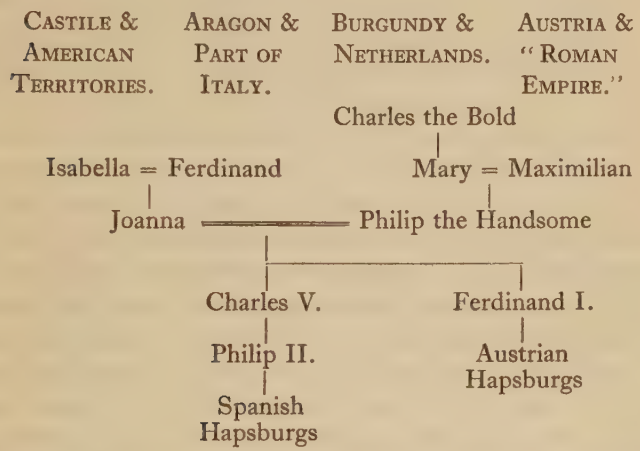

Another result of these marriages was the close and continuous alliance of the two branches of the house of Hapsburg ruling in Spain and Austria. Thus it happened that Richelieu's duel with Spain was inextricably mixed up with the great German war of religion, known as the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), and one cannot understand Richelieu's foreign policy without a general idea of the circumstances of that war.

Every country in the Middle Ages was the arena of a more or less continuous struggle between monarchy and feudalism,

between the powers of central and of local government. Such a struggle is in the nature of things, when means of communication are difficult. Local government is a necessity of nature, central government a luxury of civilisation, and where civilisation is weak, central government will be weak and local government rebellious. In England and in France central government won, and strong monarchies were established, strong monarchy in England yielding as time went on to equally centralised government by Parliament. In Germany, partly because it was larger, partly because it had less of the Roman tradition, and partly because of the malignant activities of the Popes, local government won, and long before the Reformation the German kings normally ruled no more than their hereditary dominions of Austria and Bohemia. Then came Lutheranism, and the religious settlement took the form of a Treaty (of Augsburg, 1555), which emphasised the disunion, each prince being given a free choice of his own religious policy, as between Catholicism and Lutheranism. But this treaty was made too soon to take account of the new forces of Calvinism and the Counter Reformation. The Electors of the Palatinate, ruling on the Upper Rhine, became Calvinists, and, from the beginning of Richelieu's century onwards, Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, and Ferdinand, Duke of Styria and heir to Austria and the Empire, both of them ardent pupils of the Jesuits, were eagerly extirpating Protestantism in their own dominions, and looking forward to a re-opening of the whole question of the toleration of heresy in Germany.

After various minor explosions of violence between the Calvinist and Jesuitical parties, the war which was to involve all Germany and most of her neighbours broke out in Bohemia. The Bohemian nobles, whose Protestantism went back to the time of Huss, a hundred years before Luther, having first accepted Ferdinand as their king on the death of the harmless old King and Emperor, Matthias, changed their minds, revived the ancient principle of elective

monarchy, and offered the Bohemian crown to the Calvinist Frederick, Elector Palatine, son-in-law of King James I. of England, whose help in an emergency was hoped for. Frederick rashly accepted the offer, and, after some preliminary successes, was utterly defeated at the battle of the White Mountain (1620) by the combined forces of Austria, Bavaria, and Spain, and driven both from Bohemia and from his hereditary dominions. The Lutheran princes of north Germany maintained a prudent neutrality, though the most important of them, John George of Saxony, even gave a certain amount of active support to the Emperor. Such was roughly the position when Richelieu took control of the government of France.

The foreign policy of Richelieu is exceedingly complicated in its details, but the general ideas underlying its manifold devices are simple enough. The power of Spain was to be broken, and that involved breaking the power of Austria also, for not only were the two Hapsburg governments closely allied, but the complete success of Austria in the Thirty Years War might mean the creation of a single strong German monarchy which would threaten France exactly as the strong German monarchy created by Bismarck was to threaten her two hundred and fifty years later. The most economical way of breaking this great dual power would be to make the greatest possible use of all the small states whose positions were threatened by it. Diplomacy is a better method than war, if one can thereby get one's battles fought and won by proxy. At any rate, the more one can use one's allies, the less will the weight of war fall on the shoulders of one's own country. Spain ruled Lombardy (the Milanese) and was the dominant power in Italy ; thus Richelieu could find allies in Savoy, a most valuable ally controlling both sides of the Alps, in Venice, and in the Pope. In Germany his allies would be the Calvinist states, in so far as they had not already been crushed out of existence ; possibly the Lutheran states, if they felt their position to be threatened

by the growing power of Austria ; neighbours of Germany with German interests, such as Denmark and Sweden ; the Dutch, who had reopened their long struggle with Spain in 1621 ; and possibly England, if her old hatred of Spain and traditional sympathy with distressed Protestants should rouse her to action. Even in Spain itself there might be possible allies. Portugal had been annexed by Spain in 1580, but was not happy in her loss of independence ; nor were the warlike Catalans of north-eastern Spain at all contented to be ruled from Madrid. Such were the cards in Richelieu's diplomatic hand.

It will be noticed that at least half these possible allies were Protestant—the German princes, Denmark, Sweden, Holland and England. It is commonly said that Richelieu pursued a Catholic policy at home and a Protestant policy abroad. It would be truer to say that, both at home and abroad, he excluded religious considerations from his statesmanship. He sought to make a strong France and a weak Germany ; in both France and Germany, Protestant independence was a source of weakness ; therefore he destroyed the independence (but not the religion) of the French Protestants and supported the independence of the German Protestants. As a modern French historian says, " he worked to maintain the honour of France, and left to God the care of advancing or retarding the triumph of the true faith."

A narrative outline of Richelieu's foreign policy falls into three sections, 1624-1630, 1630-1635, 1635-1642.

In the first period Richelieu was hampered by the weakness of his own government. Twice his carefully laid schemes were ruined by the rebellions of the Huguenots. The decisive event of this period is the siege of La Rochelle. When Richelieu took over the reins of government he inherited from his predecessor an alliance with England, Holland, and Denmark for resisting the Hapsburgs in Germany. But the Huguenots prevented France from taking

any effective part in the German war, and without France the coalition went to pieces. The King of Denmark was badly defeated in Germany; England, uncertain of her own aims and already working up towards the Puritan rebellion, accomplished nothing against Spain, and soon, as already related, turned her arms against France instead. Ferdinand of Austria found a general of genius in Wallenstein, and at the end of the period, *i.e.* 1630, it almost looked as if a great military monarchy would be established, stretching from one end of Germany to the other.

Richelieu was meanwhile limiting himself to smaller achievements in Italy. The crucial point in Italy was the long mountain valley of the Valtelline, running up north-eastwards from Como towards the Adige valley. The two valleys, together with the easy pass connecting them, furnished the only convenient road between Spanish Lombardy and Austria. This Valtelline valley ran through the territory of the Grisons, a Swiss people, and Richelieu, in alliance with Savoy, succeeded in establishing the neutrality of the Grison territory, and thus interrupting one line of Austro-Spanish communications. He also by another series of campaigns established a French claimant in the Duchy of Mantua, and secured for France the important Savoyard fortress of Pinerolo (Pignerol), which commanded one of the Alpine gateways into Italy.

But these were small events compared with the victories of Wallenstein in Germany, and on Germany Richelieu's attention was concentrated during the second period (1630-1635). Happily for him the triumph of Austria was more apparent than real; or, rather the military triumph had created an insoluble political difficulty. Ferdinand had been lifted to success by two supporters with divergent aims, the Catholic princes and the great adventurer Wallenstein. The Catholic princes were very ready to help the Emperor to suppress the Calvinists, especially if their own territories were thereby enlarged at the expense of their Calvinist

against Lorraine, whose duke was an ever-restless enemy of France. But after two years of dazzling triumph Gustavus was killed in battle at Lützen, and in 1634 the Swedish armies were badly beaten at Nordlingen. In 1635 Ferdinand abandoned the Edict of Restitution, and Saxony and Brandenburg once more withdrew from the war. At last the time had come when Richelieu must throw the full weight of France into the scale. If the various German belligerents had had any glimmering of statesmanship, they would at this point have brought the war to an end, and saved Germany from thirteen more years of appalling misery. For it should have been clear to both German factions that Germany was to remain disunited, and that Protestants and Catholics must tolerate one another, and that no amount of fighting would alter this result. But professional soldiers had got control of the fighting machines, and the rulers of states had not the strength of character to protect the interests of their peoples against the rapacity of their mercenaries. So the war dragged on, and Germany was laid waste for the benefit of France and Sweden. It took Germany, by common estimate, a hundred years to recover from the devastations of the Thirty Years War.

The third period of Richelieu's foreign policy began, in 1635, with the entry of France at last as an active belligerent in the Thirty Years War, no longer merely a tentative and subsidising power behind the scenes. But a nation which enters, at a late stage of a war, into competition with hardened campaigning armies, is apt to find that its generals are relatively unskilled and its troops relatively undisciplined. Such was the fate of France on this occasion, and Richelieu's most important military successes were won by the German forces of a military adventurer, Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, whose army was taken into French pay. Bernhard conquered Alsace, and captured the important fortress of Breisach on the far side of the Rhine. He then most opportunely died, and what he had privately hoped to make into a principality

for himself became a French conquest. It was, however, French troops under Harcourt that swept the Spaniards out of Piedmont, and put an end to the tergiversations of that most inconstant of allies, the Duke of Savoy.

Richelieu, unlike Napoleon, not only realised the importance of sea-power, but took intelligent steps to secure it. France had been practically without a navy when Richelieu became minister, and the fact that for a brief but critical period at the end of his ministry she was the first naval power in Europe was entirely due to his intelligent energy. England, at any rate, was quite out of the running, so far as naval supremacy was concerned. Charles I. was, during these years, trying to levy Ship-money without consent of Parliament, and John Hampden was refusing to pay it. English patriotism was, quite rightly under the circumstances, engaged in winning liberty at home at the risk of security from without. The French navy defeated the Spanish fleet in the Mediterranean, while the Dutch under Tromp destroyed another Spanish fleet in English territorial waters, at the Downs. England protested, but Charles I.'s England could be ignored. The Scottish Covenanters were already rising in rebellion against Laud's Prayer Book, and thus paving the way for the Long Parliament, and the Great Rebellion, and Cromwell. The long arm of Richelieu's diplomacy even extended into Scotland, and, with his customary superb disregard of religious and dynastic considerations, the Roman Cardinal gave financial encouragement to the Scottish Calvinists in their rebellion against their own sovereign's brother-in-law. It has been remarked that the minister who did more than anyone else to establish absolutism in France, also gave a helping hand to its overthrow in England. It may be doubted, however, whether his help was needed, or made any perceptible difference to the course of events on our side of the Channel.

Meanwhile the power of Spain was crumbling at the very centre. The union of that mountainous and unmanageable

peninsula had always been a somewhat artificial tyranny, a matter of clamps and fetters rather than a union of hearts. In the west Portugal, which had been united to Spain by a dynastic accident in 1580, sixty years before, and in the north-east Catalonia, rose in rebellion. Had Richelieu lived six months longer than he did, he would have been gladdened by the news of the battle of Rocroi (1643), the first of the long tale of French victories that was only terminated sixty years afterwards on the field of Blenheim. The great captains, Turenne and Condé, were just about to make their brilliant reputations. But in truth he must have known, without this spectacular evidence, that his task was, in all essentials, accomplished. The power of Spain was broken as surely as the power of the Huguenots and the power of the nobles.

But perhaps the most welcome achievement of all was one that lay outside the range of Richelieu's efforts. Hereditary monarchies are dependent upon the accidents of family life. Louis XIII. had no son, and the heir-presumptive, his brother Gaston, was an intolerable poltroon. At last, however, after twenty-three years of married life, the Queen gave birth to a son, the future Louis XIV.

(iv) LOUIS XIV.

Louis XIII. died a few months after Richelieu, leaving a child of four and a Spanish widow, Anne of Austria. It seemed safe to assume that Richelieu's work would be undone, that Spain would escape the doom prepared for her, and that feudalism would rebuild its castles and re-fight its duels in the streets of Paris. Only a sentimental accident, perhaps, saved the work of Richelieu from the scrap-heap. The Queen Mother fell in love with the very man whom Richelieu had made his chosen disciple and marked out as his successor; and Cardinal Mazarin was thus allowed to carry on and complete the work of Cardinal Richelieu. The German war ended with the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648.

FRENCH TERRITORIAL GAINS IN THE 17TH CENTURY

France gained the so-called "three bishoprics," Metz, Toul, and Verdun, the strong places of Lorraine, and all Alsace except Strasbourg.[1] Sweden at the same time gained Stettin, at the mouth of the Oder, and Bremen and Verden, near the mouth of the Weser. The war of France and Spain continued, and an amazing civil war, the last effort of French feudalism, known as the Fronde,[2] postponed for many years the final defeat of Spain. Both Condé and Turenne preferred, at different times, to fight for feudalism against Mazarin rather than for France against Spain. It was fortunate for the Crown that its two chief generals did not turn traitor simultaneously, and that when Condé marched on Paris, backed by Spain, in 1652, Turenne was there to drive him out of the suburb of St. Antoine.

However, the Crown won the day, thanks to the persistency of Richelieu's pupil, and, during the last years of the war, secured the alliance of England and the help of the best army in Europe, Cromwell's Ironsides. By the Treaty of the Pyrenees, 1659, France acquired Artois in the north, and Roussillon in the south, and a few other small territories. They do not amount to much on the map. The important fact was that the power of Spain was broken for ever.

And now Mazarin, his work completed, died as tactfully as he had lived (1661), and made way for the fortunate heir. The long rule of the cardinals was over, and in the person of Louis XIV., now aged twenty-two, there was a restoration of monarchy in France, much as, the year before, there had been a restoration of monarchy in England. But the positions of the restored monarchs were very different. Once the delirium of welcome was over, Charles II. of England found that he had been restored under onerous conditions. If monarchy was restored, so also was parliament; the army

[1] The acquisition of Alsace and Lorraine by France was completed by stages, as follows: 1559 the right to garrison the three bishoprics; 1648 (as above); 1684 Strasbourg; 1738 the dukedom of Lorraine, *i.e.* all of Lorraine not included in the three bishoprics.

[2] *Frondeur*, slinger, "hooligan."

was disbanded, and not all Charles's ingenuity could get it back again. Louis XIV., on the other hand, was undisputed master of France.

And now the value of Richelieu's statesmanship was to be put to the final test. For his ideal had been achieved. France was far the greatest power in Europe, and the French crown was, within France, the strongest and most efficiently organised government that had existed since the Roman Empire of the second century. Richelieu had achieved greatness and Louis XIV. had that greatness thrust upon him. The wars of religion were over ; European history was about to open a new chapter, whose title would inevitably be " The Age of Louis Quatorze." The French King enjoyed opportunities for good and for evil such as have fallen to few crowned heads in history. Louis XIV. was neither a great statesman nor a hero, but he was also neither a knave nor a fool. He was a man of rather above the average intelligence, and much above the average industry. What he became was what his position made him, so that one may say of him, more than of most great hereditary despots, that in him hereditary despotism itself is judged.

Three achievements in particular are associated with the name of Louis XIV. He created Versailles ; he revoked the Edict of Nantes ; and he brought upon his country defeat at the hands of the most widespread and highly organised coalition of powers yet seen in European history, the coalition built up by William of Orange and led to victory by Marlborough and Eugène.

Louis XIV., like Charles I., believed in the Divine Right of Kings, and this religion, which was always a heresy in England, became triumphant orthodoxy in France. Versailles was the temple of the new religion. By building Versailles and establishing a court of unparalleled magnificence, Louis XIV. completed, on one side at any rate, the anti-feudal policy of Richelieu. Richelieu, by depriving the feudal noble of his duties and his power, had cut him

loose from his ancestral estate. Louis XIV. set up a magnet just outside Paris, and drew him to the capital. The baron became a courtier, an absentee landlord, growing more and more impoverished, as his rent roll, collected by a possibly dishonest bailiff, failed to balance the bills of his Parisian tradesmen. Such was the aristocracy the French Revolution came to destroy.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was in part, no doubt, a work of perverted piety, but it was also, like the building of Versailles, the result of royal egoism. The Egoist, in Meredith's novel of that name, exclaims, " I ask to be surrounded by persons who love me." Louis XIV. asked to be surrounded by subjects who accepted all things as the King accepted them, in religion as in all else. All should briskly obey the word of command, and, as the Huguenots would not, they should go. It is difficult to exaggerate the impoverishment of the blood of France resulting from the expulsion of this hundred thousand of the sturdiest of her people. But that was not the only result. When the national religion identifies itself with tyranny and stupidity, the best men will forsake that religion and attack it. It is not fanciful to connect with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes the astonishing outburst of anti-Christian literature which was the mark of the eighteenth century France. Voltaire, its leader, was born nine years after the expulsion of the Huguenots.

Very few despots have been able to resist the temptation to play with soldiers. After all, an army, rather than a nation, is the flattering mirror that reflects royal greatness. An army can be drawn up and reviewed, but it requires imagination to realise the prosperity or the adversity of millions of obscure homes. Louis XIV. fought four wars in fifty years, each provoked by himself and each more expensive than the last.[1] It may be granted that Richelieu

[1] These wars were (i) War with Spain (1667-1668) to gain the Spanish Netherlands. The Triple Alliance of England, Holland and Sweden intervened, and France had to be content with acquiring eleven fort-

and Mazarin had not completed the extension of France to her rightful frontiers. Louis' wars won Flanders and Franche Comté and Strasburg, and laid down very nearly the frontiers that France has to-day. But these extensions of territory were dearly bought with the utter impoverishment of the country. It is characteristic of Louis XIV. that when Vauban, who had been one of the greatest of his soldiers, dared to publish, in the middle of the last great war, an outspoken account of the miseries of the French peasantry, with suggestions for their relief, his book was immediately suppressed by royal command.

These remarks on Louis XIV. seem to be fair comment on the statesmanship of Richelieu. We have seen the mediaeval Papacy fail because it undertook a task too large for it. It sought to express Christianity in a political organisation, and the organisation perverted Christianity and sought to trample on national impulses. Richelieu simplified his problem by cutting Christianity out of politics, and, within the limits he set himself, he and Mazarin between them achieved complete success—the nation triumphant over its rivals and the Crown triumphant over its subjects. But the system he created depended on the character of the wearer of the crown, and the characters of triumphant despots cannot be trusted. Criticism on the statesmanship of the mediaeval popes must be based on the fact that their ideal was not and could not be realised. Criticism on the statesmanship of Richelieu must be based on the fact that his ideal was realised, and that its realisation proved a curse.

resses to protect her northern frontier. (ii) War with Holland (1672-1678) to destroy that country: brilliant defence by William of Orange, assisted by Spain and some German princes. France gained Franche-Comté, but gave back some of the fortresses in the Netherlands. William married into the English royal family. (iii) War with Holland, England, and a larger number of German princes (1688-1697): virtually a drawn contest. (iv) War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713) to acquire the Spanish Empire for the French claimant: successful in so far as the claimant secured a large part of that empire, but France was utterly exhausted, and surrendered some Rhine fortresses, and also various American possessions, these last to England.

It may, of course, be maintained that Richelieu chose the only course open to him, that a strong hereditary despotism was the least of available evils, and that any kind of constitutional self-government was ruled out of practical politics by the circumstances in which his lot was cast. It may be so. Richelieu could certainly make out a better defence along these lines than either Napoleon or Bismarck. None the less, it must be admitted that historians show themselves even more ready to hail as " impossible " that which was never attempted, than they are to hail as " inevitable " that which actually befel. But it should be noticed that the despised Estates General of 1614 produced much valuable criticism, especially on taxation, of which Richelieu never made use ; that he always refused to summon the Estates during his own ministry ; and that, though twice, in his earlier years, he summoned Assemblies of Notables (a kind of selected House of Lords), he was careful on both occasions to admit only those whom he had reason to think would prove docile. Further, if one grants, as one must, that Richelieu was a statesman of extraordinary force both of intellect and character, one thereby secures the right to judge him by a high standard. Our English Parliament owed to strong rulers, an Edward I. and a Henry VIII., the powers it afterwards applied against weak and misguided successors. It does not seem necessary to believe that a greater Richelieu might not, even in the seventeenth century, have rescued the Estates General from the scrap-heap and spared France and the world the French Revolution. Whether the world would have been the gainer, who can say ? But Richelieu would have been a greater Richelieu.

VI

GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-1799) AND ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1757-1804)

(i) THE AMERICAN COLONIES AND THE MOTHER COUNTRY

The American colonies, for which Washington secured independence, and which Washington and Hamilton afterwards welded into the United States, were a creation of the seventeenth century; but our English seventeenth century statesmen cannot claim any particular credit for the achievement. The colonies were created by a process of expulsion, and throve by a system of neglect. Raleigh, it is true, had dreamed a dream of a New England on the far side of the Atlantic, but his attempt to translate his dream into a reality had ended in failure. The forces that gave his dream fulfilment were, in the main, religious faction and religious bigotry. The great unconscious empire builders were James I. and Archbishop Laud, and their successors in the same tradition. Perhaps the most fruitful of all the strange coincidences of history is the fact that the discovery of America and the breaking up of the old Christian unity occurred in one and the same period. When Protestant and Catholic set to work to exterminate one another, the New World was ready and waiting to receive the vanquished minorities. This is a coincidence for which the people of the United States should never cease to be thankful. For it is an obvious fact that emigrants do not leave their homeland

simply from a love of lands that they have never seen; they leave it because they have been made uncomfortable at home; and the prospects of the new country they colonise will depend very largely on the motives which have led them to seek it. The chief modern agent of emigration is economic distress, and it is well known that the new countries of to-day are far from enthusiastic about the average type of emigrant that applies for admittance. It was the good fortune of the United States that their founders were led to emigrate by the highest of motives. The Pilgrim Fathers, to name only the most celebrated group of emigrants, left Europe, not because they failed to make good in the commonplace struggle for material comfort, but because they thought nothing of material comfort in comparison with their religious ideal.

The further question arises: Why was it England rather than another European country that profited by circumstances common more or less to all Western Europe, and established her sons in the region of the New World best suited to European colonisation? Her natural rivals would be her neighbours on the Atlantic seaboard, Spain, Portugal, France and Holland. Of these, Spain and Portugal had already monopolised, to their own lasting misfortune, the gold and silver bearing lands further south. In Spain and Portugal, also, Protestantism never took root, and the finest type of colonist was therefore absent. Spain and Portugal valued their colonies for the wealth they could extract from them, and the healthy development of their settlements was throttled by a stupid system of centralised control from home. The Dutch, on the other hand, lacked population for such a venture. Their main interests were in the East Indies, and though they founded New York (under the name of New Amsterdam) they were compelled to surrender it to England in 1667.

The French should have been, and in fact were, our most serious rivals, but they, too, failed to export heretics, and

the reasons for this failure may throw a curious light on the differences between the characteristics of English and French statesmanship. The English, it has been said, love compromise and detest logic; and certainly it was a curious compromise and a failure in logical consistency which suppressed Independency and Roman Catholicism in England, but permitted and even encouraged these heresies to establish themselves and propagate their abominations under the English flag elsewhere. France, on the other hand, was at one time too tolerant and at another time not tolerant enough for imperial purposes. From 1598 to 1685, the period within which all but one of the thirteen English American colonies were founded, the French Huguenots enjoyed toleration under the Edict of Nantes. Richelieu, the contemporary of Charles I., was far more alive than Charles I. to the possibilities of America, and in 1627 formed the Company of New France to develop trade in the St. Lawrence valley. The degree of interest of the English government in the matter at that time is measured by the fact that in 1629 it presented France with Quebec, recently occupied by an English adventurer, in part payment for Queen Henrietta Maria. But meantime the bigotry of Charles and Laud was driving Englishmen to America, while the enlightenment of Richelieu was keeping the Huguenots at home. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was repealed; but French logic and Bourbon despotism applied the repeal to New France as well as to the Old. The Huguenots begged to be allowed to settle in Canada, but Louis XIV. was inexorable. As a result Canada and the French Mississippi colony of Louisiana never became much more than a collection of trading posts and military garrisons, comparable with the English "factories" in India rather than with the English colonies in America. At the date of the Seven Years War (1756-1763), when the French were expelled from Canada, the whole French population in America numbered 60,000, while the English was well on

the way from one to two millions. The exploit of Wolfe at Quebec merely placed on record a decision that had become inevitable when Louis XIV. excluded the Huguenots from Canada. It is idle to say that the French people were incapable of colonisation on English lines, for the Huguenot exiles in English America and Dutch South Africa showed themselves the equals of any colonists the world has seen. But they colonised, perforce, under a foreign flag.

At this point it will be convenient to enumerate the more important of the thirteen English colonies, whose fortunes, at the crisis of their destinies, were moulded by Washington and Hamilton. The colonies spread along the Atlantic seaboard from north to south over a space of about a thousand miles. The most northerly were the four small colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, known collectively as New England. All these grew out of the settlement of the Pilgrim Fathers at New Plymouth in 1620.[1] These colonies were from the first dominated by their Puritan Churches, and their people preserved, right down to the time of Washington, those characteristics of stern and harsh religious fervour, and truculent energy and independence, which one associates with Cromwell's Ironsides. South of New England came New York, conquered from the Dutch in 1667. This was from the first a cosmopolitan commercial centre, and contained a majority of "Tories," or friends of England, at the time of the War of Independence. Cosmopolitan also was Pennsylvania, founded by the Quaker, William Penn, in 1681. Its characteristics from the first were religious toleration, political confusion, and generous treatment of the Indians. It contained a large German element. Maryland, founded 1632, was a Roman Catholic settlement. This colony also

[1] It is perhaps interesting to remark that the "Covenant" signed by the Pilgrim Fathers immediately before landing is dated November 11; as, however, the unreformed calendar was then in force, the true date must have been November 22, and the United States cannot claim Armistice Day as their birthday.

adopted religious toleration, owing to the difficulty of securing a sufficient number of Roman Catholic settlers. Virginia, "the old Dominion," can claim to be the oldest of the colonies, being founded by a chartered company, similar in character to the East India Company, in 1607. But the colony did not really get under weigh until religious bigotry at home came to its aid. During the Puritan revolution Virginia became the refuge of persecuted royalist gentry. Among these came, in 1656, John and Lawrence Washington. Their cousin had fought under Prince Rupert, and their father had been expelled from his rectory as a royalist. The colony was old-fashioned, aristocratic, and, by religion, Anglican; a land of broad tobacco plantations worked by slave labour. The more southern colonies did not reach first-class political importance till the nineteenth century. South Carolina, founded 1670, was to become the leading cotton state; it contained a large proportion of refugees from Ulster, evicted by the iniquitous landlord system imposed upon Ireland. The latest and most southerly colony, Georgia, was founded in 1733, a year after Washington's birth.

The colonies are drawn on a map as contiguous blocks of territory, like English counties, open and vague only to rearward. Actually, they must be thought of as sparse and isolated settlements, with little mutual contact and that often of an unfriendly nature. Whenever frontiers became important they also became matters of dispute. The colonies had much less relationship with each other than each had with the mother country; for with the mother country there were ties of business and ties of sentiment. In the days before the rebellion, many more Virginians had visited London than had ever visited Boston. Of the two great tasks of Washington's career, the achievement of Union was quite as difficult as the achievement of Independence. Indeed, one may go further and say that, if there had been any sort of genuine feeling of unity among the colonies, the achievement of independence would have been a fairly simple matter.

The internal government of the colonies was of little interest to the mother country. The colonists established self-governing legislatures, and the mother country supplied governors to control the executive. Such a system, whereby one authority claims to make the law and another entirely independent authority claims to control the administration of law, is entirely unworkable as soon as fundamental differences of opinion arise. The fact that it worked with a tolerable measure of goodwill for more than a hundred years, proves that England, as represented by the governors, was prepared to let the colonists arrange their internal affairs according to their own liking. But the mother country soon became keenly alive to the commercial possibilities of this new world she had unwittingly created. With the fall of Charles I., political power passed into the hands of the mercantile class, and the Navigation Act of 1651 laid the foundation of an elaborate system of imperial trade regulation, sometimes called the Mercantile System, which grew ever more and more elaborate until the colonies overthrew it by establishing their independence.

The leading idea of this system (which all the European governments applied, with variations, to their colonies) was that an empire ought to be, as far as possible, a self-sufficing commercial unit ; that the purpose of colonies was to supply to the mother country, and not to the mother country's rivals, products which the mother country was otherwise compelled to buy from foreign countries, and that the colonies should take in exchange from the mother country, and not from the mother country's rivals, the goods which the mother country produced. For example, seventeenth-century England depended for many of the materials of shipbuilding upon imports from Scandinavia.[1] It was hoped that the American

[1] Cf. the description of Satan's spear in *Paradise Lost*, published 1667 ;

> His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
> Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
> Of some great ammiral, were but a wand.
>
> (Book I. 292-294.)

colonies would supply this deficiency. The system was accepted as just, and as, indeed, the only conceivable system by the colonists themselves, and the home government applied it to hamper the trade of mother country and colonies alike with considerable impartiality. English merchants were encouraged to export certain goods to the colonies by being prohibited from exporting them to foreign countries. Both Charles I. and Charles II. devastated the crops of English tobacco growers in the interests of Virginia. None the less, since England remained the judge as to what regulations should be made, it was inevitable that the colonists should get the worst of the bargain. In particular the New Englanders suffered. Their climate, and consequently their products, were so similar to those of England that they could not be fitted into the system without cramping their development. Cromwell, far the greatest of our early imperialists, may have had an inkling of this when he invited the New Englanders to emigrate to Jamaica, though no doubt his main motive was to puritanise his new conquest.

Where the system inflicted intolerable hardship, smuggling provided a safety valve. Smuggling became, in fact, a necessary part of the system which, had it not thus bent, would have broken. George Grenville sowed the seeds of disruption, not only by his Stamp Act, but also by his conscientious attempt to put down the smugglers. However, if the colonies were made to suffer commercially, the system provided one substantial compensation : the whole of their naval and the greater part of their military defence was undertaken and paid for by the mother country.

We must now consider what effect their history and their relationship to the mother country was likely to have upon the character of the colonists themselves. Most of them had come to America as heretics and as conscientious objectors to the religious institutions of the mother country, and though they cherished a strong and almost pathetic affection for the British Crown, their loyalty was mainly a

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[1] Quoted from Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iv. p. 69.

Thus, no alternative being proposed, the British government took the fateful step of taxing the American colonists by an Act of the British Parliament, and defied the sacred principle of "No taxation without representation." But the parallel which American patriots drew between themselves and Hampden is quaintly inappropriate. Hampden refused to pay Ship-money because Charles I. refused to summon parliament, and insisted on raising taxes without it. The new American Hampdens were people who refused to avail themselves of their own parliamentary assemblies to raise a revenue necessary for their own security.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the story of ten years' wrangling that lies between the passing of the Stamp Act in 1765 and the outbreak of war in 1775. The Stamp Act gave the leadership of colonial politics to a small body of agitators, led by the Bostonian, Samuel Adams, who already desired independence. The Stamp Act was boycotted with violence. In 1766 a change of government in England led to the repeal of the Act, coupled however with a Declaratory Act asserting Great Britain's legal right to tax the colonies. In 1767 yet a third British government renewed taxation, in the form of customs duties upon tea and various other commodities. The duties on these other commodities were afterwards abandoned, and the Tea Duty, estimated to raise the ridiculously small sum of £40,000, remained as a bone of contention. Boston rioted as before, but King George III. had now established his control of the government, and was not going to be frightened out of what he regarded as his rights. The only reply to the "Boston tea party" of 1773 was a series of Acts of Parliament, which closed Boston harbour, suspended the Massachusetts Assembly, and placed the colony under martial law. Now at last the colonies were provoked into taking a step towards federation, and in 1774 twelve of the thirteen colonies sent delegates to what came to be known as the Continental Congress, at Philadelphia. In the next spring the first

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battles were fought and Washington was appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental army.

It is a familiar, and perhaps an unattractive story; and the causes of its unattractiveness are not far to seek. Never has an empire, which the great majority of its members on both sides of the water professed to value, been broken up on such trivial grounds. Whether we compare the American cause with that of other revolutions, the Puritan Revolution or the French Revolution, or with other wars of independence, the Greeks against the Persians, the Jews against Antiochus Epiphanes, the Scots against Edward I., or the Dutch against Spain, the *casus belli* appears mean and insignificant—a tax intended to pay for but a small fraction of expenses which should in any case have been borne by the colonists themselves. And if the colonists were mean in their refusal to take the burden off the mother country's shoulders, the mother country was obstinately stupid in its attempt to enforce any tax which defied the sound principle of "no taxation without representation," and which the colonists were determined not to pay. One of the stupidest of kings controlled the British government, and the wisest men in England were agreed in opposing his American policy. Pitt said, "I rejoice that America has resisted." Burke said, "The question is not whether you have a right to make these people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy." But none of George III.'s critics had discovered a new and better system upon which the relationship of Great Britain and the colonies could be based. They had little more to suggest than the abandonment of the tax; yet it was plain that the English taxpayer could not be burdened indefinitely with the expense of strictly American undertakings. Adam Smith recommended the representation of the colonies in the British parliament, but this the Americans would have themselves refused. Anti-imperialists, like Dean Tucker, held from the very beginning of the quarrel that the colonies were a burden to England, and that

she would be well rid of them. England's capital, he wrote, and not the mercantile system, was the real source of her wealth. Free Trade was to be the rule when nations grew wiser, and common interest would regulate the course of trade better than any system of imperial tariffs.

In fact, a trivial quarrel sufficed to snap the bonds of empire, because those bonds were already weak to the point of rottenness. The relations between the mother country and the colonies had fostered trade ; they had not fostered loyalty.

The official statement of the American case is to be found in the celebrated Declaration of Independence, composed by Thomas Jefferson, and issued by Congress in 1776, the second year of the war. This document is exceedingly important, because it added, as a kind of afterthought, to the real causes of quarrel, the new religion of democracy which Rousseau had been preaching in France. Throughout the long career that lay before him, Jefferson was the representative of French revolutionary notions in America. He infused into the new nation that was about to be founded a spirit which was, at its best, romantic and idealistic, and, at its worst, hysterical. He will appear again in these pages as the most dangerous enemy of Washington and Hamilton.

The Declaration states as " self-evident, that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." All this is true, and magnificently said. The document then proceeds to specify in what respects the " life, liberty and pursuit of happiness " of the American people had been destroyed by the British government ; the model is no longer Rousseau but, perhaps, the Grand Remonstrance, in which Pym

enumerated the grievances of Parliament against Charles I. Yet a difference between Pym's "Remonstrance" and Jefferson's "Declaration" is at once apparent. However severely we may criticise the partisanship of the Grand Remonstrance, its two hundred and four concise and crabbed clauses deal with facts. Jefferson deals largely in fancies. We read of "a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object and evincing a design to reduce the colonists under absolute despotism." History cannot accept this interpretation of the events of the previous ten years. Martial law had, it is true, been established in Massachusetts, but only as a temporary defence against organised political hooliganism. The tyranny against which the American leaders were urging their half-hearted and reluctant fellow-citizens to fight, was a tyranny which not only had not yet been established, but was unlikely to be established under any circumstances.

None the less, the American rebellion was justified, though on grounds quite different from both the Tea Duties and the prospects of tyranny. Great Britain had valued the Empire for its wealth, and had so organised it as to give its colonists a singularly bad political education. No better method of organising an empire had at that date been thought of, and the colonists were justified in preferring the alternative of independence. But they little realised as yet the burdens that independence would bring with it. It was the function of Washington and Hamilton to teach them this hard lesson.

(iii) WASHINGTON AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1775-1783)

George Washington was forty-three years old when he was appointed to the command of the American forces in 1775.[1] He had been a wealthy Virginian planter. His wealth he

[1] The age of Caesar at his first consulship, and of Cromwell at the outbreak of the Great Rebellion.

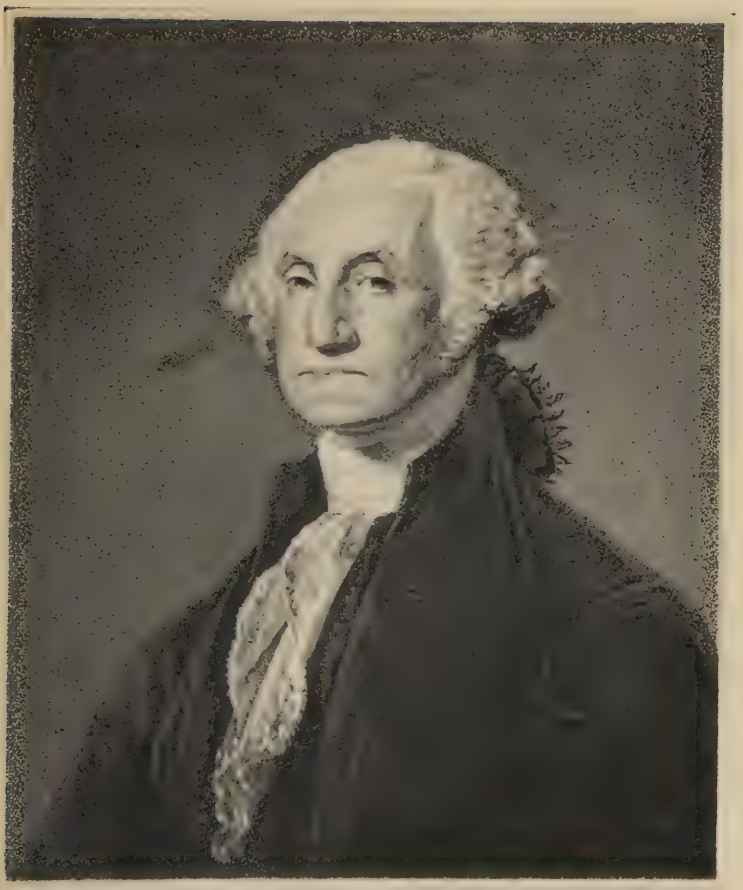
owed to inheritance and to his marriage, but also to his sound business abilities, for the art of catering for the distant English consumer was no simple one, and bankruptcy seems to have been the rule rather than the exception among Washington's neighbours. His tobacco, we read, was recognised as the best on the English market, and barrels of flour marked "George Washington, Mount Vernon" were suffered to pass without inspection at the ports of the British West Indies. Mount Vernon, Washington's home, took its name from the British admiral under whom Washington's elder brother had served in that war against Spain which is popularly associated with the missing ears of Captain Jenkins.

Washington's childhood has been adorned with deeds of almost intolerable virtuousness by the pious fancy of Mr. Weems, his earliest biographer. Weems's book was written a few years after its hero's death, and penetrated into every American home. It was one of the small library of seven books within reach of the youthful Abraham Lincoln. Weems's nursery tales gave artless and ridiculous expression to a veneration that was in itself thoroughly justified, and thereby they probably did more good than harm; but they have nothing to do with history.

The important episode in Washington's early career, the episode to which he afterwards owed the post of commander-in-chief of the American army, is the part he played in the disastrous beginnings of the Seven Years War. The French had been rapidly extending the line of fortified posts which was intended to link Canada with Louisiana on the Mississippi and enclose the English colonies from behind. In 1753 Washington was selected by the Governor of Virginia to undertake a mission of diplomatic remonstrance with the French at their newly established Fort Duquesne. It failed, as it was bound to do, but Washington (who was only twenty-one at the time) acquitted himself with credit, and in the next year was sent out as lieutenant-colonel with a small

force to drive the French from their outposts. This little force fired the first shots of the war, and conducted itself with a daring that bordered on folly. After winning one little battle, it was forced to surrender as the result of a second. Then General Braddock arrived with the English regulars, and Washington joined his staff with the rank of colonel. Braddock was a brave man and a tragic fool; he not only refrained from securing cover for his men when under fire, but regarded taking cover as an act of cowardice. When the inevitable defeat came at the hands of the French and their Indian allies, it was Washington who rescued the remnants and brought them safely out of action. For the next two years he commanded the forces of Virginia and "defended a frontier of three hundred and fifty miles with seven hundred men." In 1758 he commanded the advance guard in the attack which captured Fort Duquesne, henceforth named Fort Pitt and ultimately Pittsburgh. That was the end of his service, for the war now moved far to the north of Virginia; but it had sufficed to establish Washington's name as that of the one American with a distinguished military record behind him. These campaigns also awoke his interest in the development of the western lands, and gave him a prophetic insight, such as stay-at-home Americans would not enjoy, into the boundless inheritance awaiting the colonies.

Since this period of military activity seventeen years had passed before Washington was called to take command of the "Continental" army outside Boston in June 1775. The battle of Bunker's Hill quickly proved that the American soldiers were as brave as their enemies, and much better marksmen; but before the year was out the difficulties, which were to render Washington's task a burden almost too great for human endurance, began to show themselves. The American forces began to display that curious habit of disappearance and dissolution which had raised the ire of the English commanders in the Seven Years War. The



GEORGE WASHINGTON
From an Engraving by W. Nutter after C. G. Stuart

reasons were many. Congress, which raised the army, had not power to pay it, the power of the purse remaining now as before in the hands of the thirteen ex-colonies, or states. Secondly, the Americans inherited and exaggerated the old English dread of " standing armies " as the enemies of civil liberty. So they sought to preserve the superiority of the civil power over the military by a system of short enlistments ; four months was regarded as the proper term of service, and a year as justifiable only in circumstances of extreme emergency. Further, in order to keep the spirit of " liberty " alive in the army, it was decreed that offences against discipline could not be punished without the consent of the state to which the delinquent belonged. Such were the conditions under which Washington was expected to make an army capable of fighting Great Britain. No doubt, if there had been real tyranny and real oppression, the iron of which had entered into the American soul, these ridiculous conditions of service would have done but little to destroy a spirit of heroism which the circumstances of the struggle would have themselves created. But there had been no real tyranny, and, in spite of all the efforts of the agitators, no iron had as yet entered the soul of the average American. Strong supporters of the war were a small minority, no more numerous perhaps than its strong opponents ; the masses, from whom recruits were to be drawn, were simply uninterested. The southern states felt that the war was a northern affair, for every American taxpayer had been brought up to think that all the money he contributed must, as a matter of course, be spent in his own colony. When recruits found that, along with the inevitable hardships of military life, came the further hardship and injustice of shortage of food, shortage of clothes, and no pay, they felt that their grievances against their new government were quite as strong as any grievance ever cherished against England, and deserted. Washington won the war and founded American Independence with the help of a mere

handful, a very few thousands of heroes. These men held by him, through hunger and thirst, cold winters, retreats, defeats, and every kind of disappointment; some, because they learnt to worship their leader; some, because they were of the kind of men that, having undertaken a task, see it through to the end, others because they had a real and not only a rhetorical cause for hating England. These last were the Irish. "As for the genuine sons of Hibernia," says a contemporary, "it was enough for them to know that England was the antagonist."

Washington's greatest difficulties, in fact, were around him and behind him. Had there been also a competent English commander in front of him, his task would have been quite impossible. Not even Washington could have kept the American army in existence against a competently led enemy. But the king's government never sent a competent commander-in-chief to America. Worthy Sir William Howe, for example, who commanded during the first years, was not only an indolent soldier; he was "American" in his sympathies, and felt that if he fought sufficiently gently, he might keep the door ajar for a happy reconciliation. On one side was a general without an army, on the other an army without a general.

In March, 1776, the Bostonian phase of the war came to an end. American recruiting was still sufficiently brisk to balance the rate of desertion, and Washington succeeded in persuading the Massachusetts Assembly to "lend" him six thousand of their local militia. With these he occupied some high ground above Boston, which no commander except Howe would have left undefended, and thus rendered the English position in Boston untenable. Both leaders moved southwards towards New York, Howe by sea and Washington by land. Howe landed on Long Island. Washington suffered several defeats, first on the island and then on the mainland; his army "was melting away"; General Mercer was called to his assistance, but "his troops were only

engaged to serve until the first day of December." [1] But Howe allowed Washington, quite unnecessarily, to escape, and settled down to spend Christmas with the wealthy Tories (loyalists, friends of England) of New York.

Half of Washington's remaining forces was due for disbandment on New Year's Day, 1777, but he pledged his own private fortune for their pay, to induce the men to remain, and, by winning two brilliant little battles at Trenton and Princeton, proved that the American army was still in existence. But the darkest days were still ahead. During 1777 Howe wandered aimlessly southwards, twice defeated Washington, without however destroying his army, and settled down for the winter in Philadelphia. In the north, Burgoyne invaded the states from Canada, but was held up, surrounded, and forced to surrender at Saratoga. The credit for this success was due more to Washington's foresight and strategic arrangements than to any other factor, but the glory of conducting the final operations fell to Gates, one of the least competent of American officers. Washington had been forced to lecture Congress somewhat frankly upon " this pernicious state system," and the neglect of the needs of the army, and it was almost inevitable that foolish politicians should turn towards Gates and seek to put him in Washington's place. Much now began to be heard about " the sin of idolatry " ; the Americans, it was averred, were making a man their God, and no good could be expected from the army until Baal and his worshippers were banished from the camp. Meanwhile, Washington and his army were starving at Valley Forge.

The Battle of Saratoga convinced the French government that American Independence was a good investment, and that by joining the Americans they might get some revenge for the defeats France had suffered in the Seven Years War. But the alliance proved for some time to come a doubtful

[1] *Life of Washington,* by Marshall (an American contemporary, afterwards Chief Justice).

boon. British sea power, though weaker and worse handled than it had been at any time since the beginning of the century, was still formidable, and it was not till 1780 that a French army was landed, nor till 1781 was effective French naval co-operation achieved. As soon as it was achieved, however, the English position became impossible, and the war was brought to a sudden end. These events, at present, were a long way off, and the immediate result of the alliance was to encourage the Americans to believe that the French would take the burden of fighting England off their shoulders, just as the English had formerly taken the burden of fighting France.

The French government, it need hardly be said, had little love of the Americans or of their ideals of "liberty"; Washington, indeed, was seriously alarmed at the prospect of the French seeking to reinstate their rule in Canada. He probably hardly realised that the French Canadians had no more desire for reunion with France than his own people had for reunion with England. But, preceding the alliance with the French government, there had come a number of French volunteers, among them the brilliant and lovable La Fayette, who were touched with Rousseauite enthusiasm for the ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence. Volunteers also came from elsewhere, among them a Prussian, Baron von Steuben, who joined Washington at Valley Forge, and gave the troops their first orthodox training in massed movements and the manual drill of bayonet fighting.

Fresh disappointments marked the military events of 1778. Clinton had succeeded Howe, and defeated the Americans at Monmouth Court House, owing to the incompetence, perhaps the treachery, of General Lee. The British fleet outmanœuvred the French on the American coast, and drove it to the West Indies. In 1779 Washington resolutely avoided battles which, in the existing condition of his forces, could only end in defeat, and incurred the unpopularity with which civilian opinion always censures Fabian tactics. In 1780,

Gates, the " hero " of Saratoga, was defeated by Cornwallis, the best of the English generals, and Arnold, one of the most competent of Washington's lieutenants, deserted to the enemy. During this year, Washington, rather than see his army starved out of existence, took the momentous step of levying supplies for its maintenance, on his own authority. The wonder is that he had not done this long before. Even now, " in resorting to arbitrary power, he handled it with the care of a doctor administering strychnine. His exactions were carefully systematised, restricted within the narrowest bounds, safeguarded against abuse, and accurately explained in letters circulated to the magistrates. That so many years spent as a leader of revolution should have left his respect for law undiminished is one of the marvels of history, and marks Washington as the supreme product of Anglo-Saxon civilisation. But, in principle, he had at length been driven to the same resort as Grenville, when, after waiting in vain for the assemblies to impose taxation, he had passed the Stamp Act and levied it over their heads." [1]

In October 1781 the end came. Cornwallis was caught at Yorktown, between the French fleet and the Franco-American army, and compelled to surrender. British forces remained in New York for two years more, until the signature of the treaty, but no further attempt was made to conquer the country.

And now the states prepared to treat their victorious, and therefore henceforth useless, army as the Long Parliament had treated Cromwell's Ironsides. Congress had granted the officers half-pay for life, but the states refrained from raising the necessary funds. The officers approached Washington, and asked him to enforce their just demands. Here, not for the first or last time in his career, he rejected the Cromwellian course and succeeded in persuading the officers to be patient a little longer. Two months later, one of his colonels wrote begging him, on behalf of many fellow

[1] Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations*, p. 570.

officers, to make himself king, or dictator of America. He refused at once, " with a mixture of surprise and astonishment." It is actions like these which place Washington on a level far above the Cromwells, the Napoleons, the Bismarcks of history. Those great men, faced with the obvious impotence, dishonesty, and drivelling incompetence of such organs of self-government as they found at their disposal, proud in the consciousness of their own superb abilities, determined to take the easy course, swept away the incumbrances of " freedom," and, having shattered constitutions to bits, forcibly remoulded them nearer to their own hearts' desire. The verdict of history upon this line of action is recorded in the catastrophes which befell the structures of despotism which these three men of genius set up. Washington, on the other hand, never lost faith in the principles of self-government. He refused despotism. The remainder of his life was to be devoted to the task of guiding his perverse fellow-countrymen into the courses wherein they would learn to govern themselves.

The treaty of peace was signed in 1783, and in December of that year Washington resigned his command and bade farewell to his army. Two years before, one of his aristocratic French comrades in arms had written, " This is the seventh year that he has commanded the army and that he has obeyed the Congress ; more need not be said." [1]

(iv) ANARCHY AND UNION (1783-1789)

The sovereignty which had departed from George III. had become thirteen sovereignties, and resided in the govern-

[1] President Wilson, who quotes this remark in his biography, imagines that it was written without irony, and that no censure on Congress was implied. This I cannot believe ; the remark, unless intentionally ironical, is quite idiotic. Wilson of course admits that the gibe at Congress, whether intended or not, was entirely deserved (*Life of Washington*, p. 217).

ments of the thirteen states. Of the two powers that had made for united action during the war, one, General Washington, had laid down his command, and the other, Congress, remained. Congress was not a sovereign body; it was merely the council of an alliance of states. It could requisition men and money, but if the states chose to disregard its requisitions, Congress had no legal remedy. Over the individual citizens of the several states it had no jurisdiction. In dealing with the governments of the several states it might use threats, eloquence, or diplomacy, but it could not issue a command. "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union" were proposed in 1776, and accepted in 1781, but since they asserted that each state retained its "sovereignty, freedom, and independence," they might almost as well not have been accepted at all. In them the states did no more than "covenant" to endorse the resolutions of Congress, but, since the covenanters expressly retained their sovereignty, such a covenant could not be binding. Congress possessed only influence, and, as Washington said, "Influence is not government." Congress could not raise a pennyworth of taxation, and, as Hamilton said, "Government without revenue is no more than a name."

By the treaty of Versailles, which ended the war, Great Britain acknowledged the independence of the states. She undertook to surrender her frontier posts in the Indian lands to the south of the Great Lakes, and gave up all claim to the uncharted West. In return the delegates of Congress undertook two obligations: that no impediment should be put in the way of the recovery of debts due to British subjects from the citizens of the Republic; that no further prosecutions or confiscations should be directed against "loyalists," *i.e.* those who had supported England, actively or passively, during the war. The first demand was a matter of simple justice; the second was not only a matter of simple justice, but was clearly in accord with the true interests of the states

themselves. It was no more than an undertaking that the Americans would abstain from a petty and pointless spitefulness towards their own fellow-countrymen. Yet both these promises were violated from the first in every particular by the state governments. From out of a country which had need of all the population it could secure, fifty thousand " loyalists " were driven into Canada. These were the true founders of British, as distinct from French, Canada, and they carried with them to their new home a love of the mother country, quickened by a hatred of the states they had left. Great Britain, therefore, very properly refrained from handing over the frontier posts, an act which was regarded as a masterpiece of perfidy ; and American politicians persuaded themselves, against all the evidence, that the British garrisons therein were responsible for the Indian raids which soon beset the Western settlements. It was pleasanter to overlook the real cause of the renewed Indian activities, namely anarchy in the states themselves. However, the states treated their late allies scarcely better than they treated their late enemies. No serious effort was made to pay the interest on the loans advanced during the war by France and Holland. Congress had raised the loans, but only the states could pay the interest, and how much of it was each to pay ? The most economical plan for each state was to wait and take its cue from its neighbour. It was the old difficulty that had led to the Stamp Act once again.

This outbreak of political immorality can be explained and therefore, in a sense, excused, just as can the more sensational crimes of history, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, or the Reign of Terror. These Americans had led, within the British Empire, a sheltered and irresponsible political life. Circumstances had deprived them of an education in international politics. Only bitter experience could teach them that, in this sphere, as in others, honesty is the best policy.

Washington, watching events from his retirement at Mount

Vernon, saw all his worst anticipations being fulfilled, but he did not lose his faith. He knew the remedy, " an indissoluble union of the states under one federal head," as he had stated it in a circular letter to the state governors shortly before laying down his command, and he believed that bitter experience would drive the lesson home. He must also have foreseen, though his modesty conceals the fact, that sooner or later he would, if his life was spared, be called on to take the lead in a new task, as great or greater than that which he had already performed, the creation of that " indissoluble union."

Meantime, he turned his attention to one of the deepest interests of his life, the development of the West, a term which at this date implied no more than the country between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi. With the characteristic sagacity of a good business man, he had, long before the war, pegged out claims for himself in those undeveloped areas. Disputes had now arisen between the claims of Virginia and North Carolina, and Washington, in 1785, invited delegates of these states to come to Mount Vernon, and discuss the plain matters of business that western development involved. It quickly became apparent that co-operation and uniformity of method were essential, and the conference decided to propose to all the thirteen states that they should send delegates in the following year to discuss the whole situation, at Annapolis. Only nine states accepted the invitation, and of these only five sent delegates. But the conference met in a chastened mood, in which words of wisdom were likely to receive attention. The paper money issued by Congress had lost all value. Half Massachusetts was in rebellion against its own government. There was a dangerous quarrel with Spain (to whom France had surrendered Louisiana at the end of the Seven Years War) over the navigation of the Mississippi. The southern states were threatening to return to British allegiance if war was not declared against Spain, and the northern states were threatening similar measures

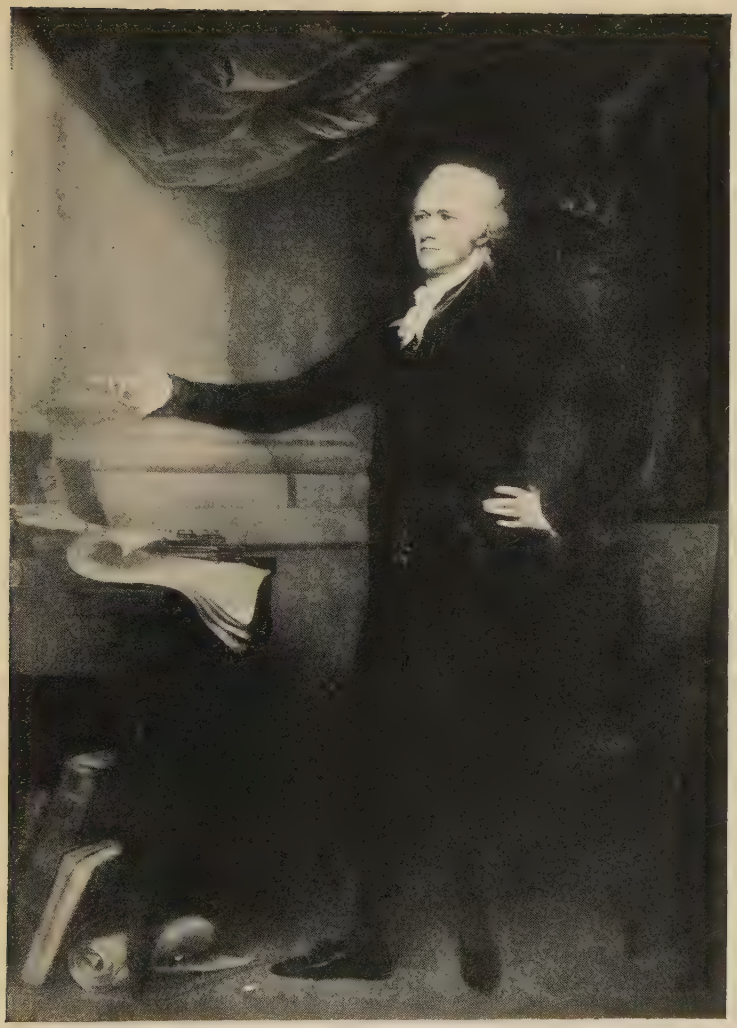
if the southern states got the war they wanted. The time was ripe, in fact, for repentance and a fresh start; and among the delegates at Annapolis was Alexander Hamilton.

Hamilton was born in the British West Indies in 1757, the son of a Lowland Scot and a French Huguenot. The mainland of America was his home by adoption, but not by birth. Like Napoleon, he could study the country to which he gave his services with the detached intelligence of an outsider. In his boyhood he showed precocious literary ability, and kind friends supplied the funds necessary for a college education at New York, whither he came in 1773, the year of the Boston tea party, at the age of sixteen. Three years later he was a captain of artillery, and, after distinguishing himself by reckless bravery on several occasions, was appointed aide-de-camp and secretary to Washington in 1777.

Thus began a partnership perhaps unique in history. It is unnecessary to describe Hamilton's political opinions; they were the same as those of his master. But his qualities were such as Washington did not possess, and, in the work that lay before them both, at Annapolis and after, the gifts of Hamilton were as indispensable as the gifts of Washington. Washington's greatness, over and above his very great military skill and his undeviating common-sense, lay in his character. It is impossible to refrain from following the example of more than one biographer, and quoting in application to him Wordsworth's lines upon "The Happy Warrior." For he was one,

> "Who, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
> In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw."

Washington divined the right statesmanship for his country with that sublime common sense which is three parts of wisdom, but his intellect moved slowly and cautiously in such regions, and his speech and pen more cautiously still. In matters of political detail, upon which all statesmanship must rest, he was not an originator. Hamilton, on the other



ALEXANDER HAMILTON

From the portrait by John Trumbull in the City Hall, New York

hand, brought to such problems an intellectual genius of the highest order. He was a bold and rapid improvisor of expedients, a persuasive pamphleteer, a master of law and of finance. In what follows it would be idle to discriminate between the work of the two men. Such was the generosity of their friendship, that either would have been glad that posterity should allot the whole of the credit to the other. In combination they proved irresistible; but, without Hamilton's resourcefulness, Washington would have achieved much less than he did achieve, and without the support of Washington's character and prestige, Hamilton could probably have achieved nothing at all. The measures that made the United States were the product of Hamilton's brain, but the support those measures won grew out of reverence for Washington's character.

Such was the man who now, at the age of twenty-nine, represented the state of New York at the Conference of Annapolis in 1786. His task was to persuade that meagrely-attended conference that nothing effective could be done, either for western development or for commercial problems in general, until there was a real union of the states. The Conference therefore limited its business to recommending the states to appoint commissioners to meet at Philadelphia in the following year, "to devise such further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union." Out of this Convention of Philadelphia came the Constitution of the United States. Washington, it need hardly be said, was elected president of the Convention, and Hamilton was the master mind in its counsels. But this youthful immigrant [1] would only have solidified the opposition of the waverers had he allowed his leadership to become too conspicuous, and his strength was hardly more remarkable than the tact behind which he concealed it.

[1] Hamilton, at Philadelphia, was the same age as Napoleon at the *coup d'état* of Brumaire. The parallel is fertile in curious contrasts.

Two plans, both somewhat crude and ill-considered, were laid before the Convention soon after it met. The plan of the Virginia delegates involved the virtual abolition of the states; the plan of the New Jersey delegates safeguarded the authority of the states so completely as to ensure the incompetence of the central government. Hamilton then outlined a far more elaborate scheme. He had no hope of its adoption, but he believed, and rightly, that its frank assertion would influence the debates and set opinion developing itself along the right lines. He started from the principle that the British Constitution was the best in the world. It seems strange that an American should hold such an opinion about the government of George III., but Hamilton's mind was above prejudice; further, he was not thinking of the personal character and policy of the reigning monarch, but of his position in the state. A strong and popular "monarchy," he held, was necessary for holding the balance between the power of wealth and the power of numbers. In its House of Lords, again, England recognised and gave power and political duties to wealth and merit. The House of Lords gave the constitution stability, protecting it from rash innovations, whether attempted by King or Commons. Stripped of their elements of hereditary rights, these institutions must be reproduced in America, to balance the forces of democracy concentrated in a popular assembly.

Hamilton, therefore, proposed: (i) a President, or "monarch," elected for life by the whole people, and removable only by impeachment, empowered to choose his own ministers, and to place a veto upon any legislation; (ii) a Senate, consisting of members elected for life ("life peers," as one would say in England) and removable only by impeachment, and exercising, in conjunction with the President, the powers of making war and peace; (iii) an Assembly, consisting of members elected for three years; (iv) that the states should retain control of such matters as the central government saw fit to allot to them; (v) that the state

governors should be appointed by the central government, and empowered to veto state legislation.

This scheme was described at the time, and has often since been described, as anti-democratic and anti-republican. Hamilton himself would have accepted the description, and made a merit of it, but we cannot do so, for the meanings of both terms " democracy " and " republic " have changed in the last hundred and thirty years. When Hamilton said that America was unfit for a republic, and that he preferred a monarchy, " republic " meant to him the rule of mobs in city market places, and monarchy meant simply the rule of one man. Again, when Hamilton declared that " democracy was a great beast," he was quoting Plato, and referring to the violence of revolutionary mobs. As we use the terms to-day, Hamilton's scheme is strictly republican in its exclusion of the hereditary element, and strictly democratic in that all its authorities, President, Senate, and Assembly, owe their power to popular election. In one respect, however, Hamilton's scheme is less democratic than the scheme ultimately adopted. His President and Senators are elected for life; hence the popular will would control these organs of government only at rare and uncertain intervals. Once President and Senators were elected, they would not need to listen overmuch to the whisperings of *vox populi*.

Two points in Hamilton's scheme made it unacceptable: the life tenures of the President and of the Senators, and the subordination of the states. As regards the second, Hamilton purposely overshot the mark. He had mastered the parliamentary art which lies in including in any bill certain clauses to be given away, to pacify opposition and protect the remainder of the measure. The life tenures, on the other hand, Hamilton valued very greatly. He saw how much England owed to the political services of an aristocracy too proud to be tempted to play the demagogue, and sacrifice statesmanship to popularity. In America there was no such aristocracy, and he held that only life tenure could protect

the President and Senators from neglecting the business of statesmanship in favour of political window-dressing.

After four months' hard work, behind closed doors, the Convention completed its work. Hamilton's president for life had become a president for four years; his senators for life had become senators for six years, and they were to be elected, not by the people divided into constituencies, but by the legislatures of the states; state governors were to be similarly elected, and the states were to retain control of all matters except such as the constitution allotted to the Federal Congress, which consisted of the Senate, as described above, and the House of Representatives, elected by the whole people and sitting for two years only. The more important of the subjects reserved to the control of Congress were: peace and war, defence, and the revenue necessary for these; the regulation of tariffs; laws of naturalisation and bankruptcy; coinage and currency; and the administration of territories beyond the frontiers of the existing states, together with the regulation of their future admission as states. It has been said that nine out of ten of the laws with which the ordinary American citizen to-day comes in contact, are state and not federal laws.

This constitution, unlike Hamilton's scheme, created a Federal, not a Unitary,[1] state. That is to say, the sovereignty which, four years before, had departed from George III.'s government and taken up its abode in the states, though it had now departed from the states, had not taken up its abode with the Federal Government; for the Federal Government could not interfere with state arrangements as regards

[1] A Federal state is one where authority is distributed between central and local organs of government. A Unitary state is not one in which there is no local government (this would be called a centralised state), but one in which, as in Great Britain and in Hamilton's Constitution, the organs of local government derive their powers from the central government. Thus an Act of Parliament could abolish our County Councils, just as an Act of Parliament created them, but Congress in America to-day cannot legally abolish the State legislatures, any more than a combination of the State legislatures could legally abolish Congress.

franchise, education, and all the hundred and one topics which the constitution refrained from allotting to it. What then had become of sovereignty? Normally, it resided in the constitution itself, which neither Congress nor states could alter by ordinary methods of legislation. A Supreme Court was established, to interpret the constitution, and to declare null and void any action of any authority which infringed its articles. But, behind the written document of the constitution, lay the sovereignty of the people, and special methods were laid down in the constitution itself by which the constitution could be amended. A constitutional amendment becomes part of the constitution, and thereby alters it, when it has been carried by two-thirds majorities through both the Houses of Congress, and has also been ratified by three-quarters of the states. Eighteen such amendments have been carried.[1]

Such was the constitution drawn up by the Convention of Philadelphia. It now remained to secure its acceptance by the states. Into this task Hamilton threw himself heart and soul, and, with certain collaborators, produced a series of eighty-five pamphlets, known collectively as "The Federalist," which stated the case for union with unsurpassable clarity and vigour. Hamilton fought the battle of the constitution in New York, and Washington in Virginia. The war of words lasted nine months. By June 1788 the

[1] The following list of the more important amendments may be of interest. Eleven amendments were carried in the first ten years of the constitution (1789-1798), inserting oversights. They are mostly such small changes as an author might make in the second edition of a book, when he is able to profit from the criticisms of his reviewers. The most interesting is the first, forbidding Congress to establish or prohibit any form of religion. The twelfth amendment (1804) originated with Hamilton, and corrected an absurdity which had become apparent in the constitutional method of electing the Vice-President (see page 216). The thirteenth amendment (1865) abolished slavery, and the fifteenth (1870) gave the franchise to the negroes. The sixteenth (1913) authorised Congress to raise money by an Income Tax. The seventeenth (1913) transferred election of Senators from state legislatures to the states themselves. The eighteenth (1918) transferred liquor control from the states to the Federal Government, and established prohibition.

constitution was accepted by three-quarters of the states, and on April 30, 1789, Washington, having been unanimously elected, was inaugurated as President.

(v) THE PRESIDENCY OF WASHINGTON (1789-1797)

The man who undertakes the leadership of a new state occupies a very different position from one who succeeds to the leadership of a state well-established. It is not merely that he first finds himself a kind of political Robinson Crusoe, called upon to construct with his own hands the primary and permanent necessities of political life. If a twentieth-century president of the United States should prove unequal to his task, he may ruin his reputation, split his party, and even seriously inconvenience his fellow-countrymen, and there the matter would presumably end ; but if Washington had failed, the Union would have been destroyed and chaos come again. The task of Washington's presidency was to prove that the Union was worth living for, and, if need be, dying for. In this work Hamilton and he were partners, as before, and though Hamilton's name will generally be used in connection with domestic affairs, and Washington's in connection with foreign affairs, it must be understood that in both spheres they worked together.

Washington had an abhorrence of political parties, such as seems almost a matter of instinct with good soldiers, and he determined to work with a Cabinet which should be representative rather than partisan.[1] As his two chief ministers he selected Hamilton, the chief apostle of Union, and Jefferson, whose support to the Union had been dubious until the very last moment. Hamilton was Secretary to the

[1] Party government is now accepted, and rightly accepted, as the only honest and workable method of conducting representative government. But it was not so then, and it is worth remarking that the greatest English statesman of Washington's day, the elder Pitt, abhorred party as Washington did, and sought to construct his Cabinet of 1766 on non-party lines.

Treasury, and Jefferson Secretary of State, *i.e.* Foreign Secretary. Hamilton was chosen because Washington knew him to be indispensable, Jefferson because a great many people believed him to be so.

Sound finance is the foundation of political health, and Hamilton's first duty was to cope with the debts incurred in the course of the war.[1] These debts were of three kinds : debts incurred by Congress to foreign creditors, debts incurred by Congress to domestic creditors, and debts incurred by the several states. Hamilton proposed that the central government should recognise all these liabilities at their face value, should undertake full responsibility to the various creditors, and should see to the discharge of all arrears of interest in accordance with the bond. With these objects he proposed to consolidate the whole in a National Debt, and provide a scheme for its gradual redemption. He also very properly proposed, in return for the creditors' improved security, to reduce the rate of interest on the more highly charged loans, and, in fact, to pay interest on all the loans at a uniform rate.

Little opposition was offered to Hamilton's proposals regarding the foreign debt, but when it came to the case of the domestic debtor, many members of Congress contended that there had been much speculation going on, and that original holders had sold their securities for a tenth of their value during the period of hopeless anarchy, when the old Congress had proved totally unable to induce the state to raise revenue for the payment of interest to bondholders. Would it be fair, they asked, that these speculators should profit by the new turn of events ? This was the old hankering after repudiation, masquerading as poetic justice. Hamilton had to insist that a promise to pay does not cease to be a promise to pay when you disapprove of the character of the holder of the bond. He carried his point.

[1] In dealing with this subject I have done no more than abbreviate the admirable account in Oliver's *Life of Hamilton*, part iii, chapter v.

The assumption of the state debts by the Federal Government proved a harder matter still. The southern states, which had mostly incurred small debts or none, thought it monstrously unfair that the Union should be saddled with the heavy debts of the northern states, and Hamilton's proposal would have been defeated, had he not pacified the southerners by supporting their request that the new capital of the Union should be in southern territory. He thus secured a principle in return for a compliment—a compliment which, we may be sure, he was the more glad to pay, in that it implied that the new city of " Washington " would be built within the President's own state, and not far from his old home.

In his battles with Congress, Hamilton was prevented, by American constitutional practice, from making use of his immense parliamentary gifts. American ministers are excluded from Congress, and cannot, therefore, like English ministers, match themselves with their critics across the floor of the House. Hamilton's only method of communication with Congress was the written, not the spoken word. The purpose of the exclusion of ministers was to prevent them " corrupting " Congress. It was a worthy purpose, and it is interesting to remember that, in William III.'s reign, the English Parliament passed an act (which was never enforced) excluding ministers from the House of Commons, and for the same reason. The drawback to the arrangement is that it robs Congressional debates of much of the vitality they would otherwise possess.

In 1791 Hamilton followed up his successes with the establishment of a National Bank, on the lines of the Bank of England. He knew how much the establishment of the Bank of England and the National Debt, in the reign of William III., had done to bind together the wealthy classes of England in support of the new government, and he saw that similar measures would do the same thing for the Union. Then a constitutional obstacle arose. It was contended that banking

was outside the four corners of the constitution; a thing that could not lawfully be undertaken by the central government. Hamilton replied with the subtle doctrine of "implied powers." If nothing could be done that was not expressly named in the articles of the Union, those articles would strangle development. The constitution must be interpreted in accordance, not with its letter, but with the spirit that was found to animate it. The Supreme Court, under the presidency of Chief Justice Marshall, who is reckoned one of the greatest of lawyers, upheld Hamilton on this momentous issue, and Washington accepted the decision.

In conjunction with the establishment of the Bank, Hamilton introduced an elaborate and ambitious scheme for the development of manufactures in the states by means of tariffs and bounties and state endowment of research. These proposals were not adopted, but they are of interest as showing that Hamilton was entirely opposed to the new doctrine of Free Trade which, by the efforts of his contemporary, the younger Pitt, was rapidly winning its way in England.

The question of the Bank had brought to a head a bitter rivalry between Hamilton and Jefferson. Jefferson is one of those characters about whom historians seem unlikely ever to agree; from some he wins romantic veneration, from others cold contempt. We shall here be concerned almost exclusively with his shortcomings, so let it be said at once that all that was best (as well as nearly all that was silliest) in the ideas of the French Revolution found in him a sincere exponent. He worked hard and successfully for enlightened causes in his own state of Virginia, the establishment of religious toleration, the reform of land laws which pressed hardly on the poor, and the provision of cheap education, and he had advocated, though in this matter he failed to win support, a thoroughly sensible scheme for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, and their repatriation in Africa.

It is generally said that Jefferson was a democrat and that Hamilton, certainly, and Washington, possibly, were not.

This statement deserves scrutiny. All three were democrats in so far as all three, without the slightest hesitation, held that government should be based on popular consent. None of the three was, in the common meaning of the phrase, " a son of the people " ; they were gentlemen by birth and tradition. Washington and Hamilton accepted the fact with pride ; Washington, it has been admirably said,[1] was " an aristocrat by taste and a democrat by principle." Jefferson, on the other hand, loved even the sad externals of the Demos. Had he lived in Shakespeare's Rome, he would have worn a sweaty nightcap. As it was, his dress was studiously unkempt, slippers down at heel, threadbare corduroys, and dirty neck-cloth, and the more formal the occasion the more unkempt was he. He might have been (though he was not) the author of that famous test of punctuation—" I will wear no clothes to distinguish me from my fellow men."

It appears, then, that Washington and Hamilton accepted democracy as a matter of common convenience, whereas Jefferson made of it a religion. But there is more to be said. Washington and Hamilton held that it was the duty of a statesman to lead the people, to form his own views as to the direction in which that leadership should tend, and hold to his view through evil report and good. If the people would not support the statesman's policy, it was his duty to relinquish office, and to seek to win it again by political preaching and teaching, but not to change the policy he believed in for another in which he did not, simply because he discovered that the other was more popular. Jefferson, on the other hand, held the doctrine of *vox populi, vox dei ;* he held that the first duty of the statesman is to listen, and that the first merit of a policy is that it should be popular. Hamilton and Jefferson each gained what each most valued ; Hamilton, the reward of fruitful work well done, even though its author's name slipped from popular memory ; Jefferson, the reward of a resounding popularity. Washington achieved

[1] By President Wilson.

both, though he cared for the second only as a means to the first.

Jefferson's quarrel with Hamilton was in part mere personal jealousy. He had expected that the author of " The Declaration of Independence " would be the first man in the Cabinet. He found himself very definitely the second. He resented Hamilton's unique influence with Washington. But he also genuinely disliked Hamilton's policy. Hamilton held that good government is strong government ; Jefferson held (in disagreement not only with his master, Rousseau, but with every political thinker worth mentioning, except perhaps Tolstoi) that strong government is destructive of liberty. And now Washington's mistake in trying to maintain a " representative " instead of a party cabinet became apparent. Jefferson schemed against Hamilton from within the cabinet, and secretly organised, and financed, a press campaign against his own colleague. The quarrel came to a head over foreign policy. This was Jefferson's own department ; and yet Hamilton's ubiquitous activity and clear-cut views left no department to itself, and Washington was always in agreement with Hamilton.

In the month following Washington's inauguration as President, the Estates General met at Versailles, and the French Revolution began. By degrees it became clear that, though the states had ceased to be a political dependency of England, they had to a large extent become an intellectual dependency of France. Jefferson caught the infection from the outset, and spread it with all his might. After all, was he not the official expert on things French among his own people? He had popularised the axioms of Rousseau, and from 1784 until 1789 he had been the envoy of Congress in Paris. He had stayed there long enough to take part in the excitements of the first month of Revolution, and when he returned to America to take up his duties of Secretary of State, and found that both Washington and Hamilton viewed the Revolution with indifference or dislike, he experienced all

the emotions of an expert contradicted by amateurs. As years passed, and the horrors of the Revolution grew in France, so its legendary glories grew in the minds of an expanding section of the American public. Jefferson defended even the September massacres. It was discovered that America was bound to France by a debt of gratitude, though why a debt incurred to the French monarchy should be payable to French regicides is hardly obvious to-day.

When, in January 1793, the French declared war on the old enemy, England, who had refused to surrender the frontier posts, and was credited with having instigated the raids of the Indians, Jefferson's party demanded war, in alliance with France. But Washington stood as firm as a rock, and Hamilton with him. " Beware of entangling alliances " was one of his most often repeated counsels. Jefferson was overruled in the Cabinet, and Washington issued, in April, his Declaration of Neutrality, which laid the foundations of that cardinal principle of American foreign policy, the non-intervention of America in Europe and of Europe in America, which afterwards, under the name of the Monroe Doctrine, came to be associated with the name of one of the least admirable of Washington's successors.[1]

A fortnight before the issue of the Declaration of Neutrality, an ambassador of the new French Republic arrived in the States. Genêt was an ardent young revolutionist, and he had been encouraged by the Secretary of State to suppose that the American government would fall prone before him. He proceeded to commission the arming of privateers, and, when government officials drew his attention to this breach of the Declaration of Neutrality, he talked menacingly about " appealing to the people." Washington decided that Genêt's

[1] In 1823 Monroe, then President, declared that the United States would regard as an unfriendly act the intervention of any European power in the affairs of the American continent. The occasion of the statement was the proposal of certain Powers to assist Spain in the recovery of her American colonies. Canning, foreign minister of the British government, stated that Great Britain also was prepared to oppose any such undertaking.

recall should be demanded from the French government. Jefferson begged to be allowed to resign his office, but Washington insisted that he should remain within the Cabinet until the end of the year (1793), and that he should share responsibility for the condemnation of the French ambassador, for whose antics he was so largely responsible. Genêt responded with a scurrilous attack on the American President, and thereby he burst the bubble of his own popularity. Jeffersonian newspapers had, it is true, for the six months that had elapsed since the Declaration of Neutrality, been unwearying in their denunciations of the "Caesar," the "Tarquin," under whose tyranny America was groaning. But when a foreigner used the same language, American pride was touched to the quick. Genêt disappeared, Jefferson resigned, and the first great crisis in the foreign policy of the States was safely over.

Hatred of England was, in part, a corollary of admiration for the French Revolution, but there were other and older causes of bitterness. England had not surrendered the frontier posts; she had rejected, as she had of course a perfect right to do, Pitt's scheme for free trade between the two countries. But over and above special grievances, English indifference was a source of natural irritation. When once she had parted with her colonies, England turned over the leaf of an unsatisfactory, but, as it might well seem, an unimportant chapter in her history, and forgot all about America as quickly as possible. This was as vexing to Americans as the behaviour of Lord North on the Treasury Bench had been to his parliamentary opponents. If Lord North had been pretending to go to sleep, he would have been guilty of no more than a petty insult and a bad joke; but it appears that he really went to sleep during the harangues of his political opponents, for the simple reason that he found himself unable to keep awake. Parliamentary abuse acted upon his constitution as a gentle opiate, and the eloquence of American orators and journalists, when it succeeded in

reaching our side of the Atlantic, acted upon the British government and people in a similar manner. Hamilton was exceedingly anxious for a friendly business deal with Great Britain, which would settle old scores, and pave the way for a commercial treaty between the two countries. He had himself, by his financial measures, made such a settlement possible. But Jefferson stood in his way, holding, as he did, that it was well to keep " alive an altercation " with " the enemy of freedom."

The war between England and France (1793 onwards) added grievances of real weight. Great Britain, in this as in all her modern wars, was determined to use her sea power to prevent neutral trade from assisting her enemies, and, to the restriction of neutral trade, she added the abominable practice of seizing American citizens on American vessels, on the assumption that they were British deserters, and forcing them into her own navy. On these issues Washington and Hamilton were prepared to fight, but, while putting the country in a state of defence, they sent a special envoy to England, in the hope of negotiating an honourable settlement. Washington desired that Hamilton himself should undertake the mission, but the American press had pilloried him so prominently as the enemy of France, that it seemed best to fall back on a less dynamic personality, and Jay, a notable lawyer and a very honest man, was selected.

Jay left for England in 1794, and returned with his treaty in the following year. He had been well received ; he had even been presented at Court, and had kissed the Queen's hand, an offence, so the opposition press declared, for which his lips ought to be " blistered to the bone." The treaty which he brought back ignored American grievances in the matter of neutral trade and impressment from American ships, but secured the surrender of the frontier posts, and the right of American traders to trade with the British West Indies, provided that America undertook not to export to Europe from her own country any of the principal products

of those islands. The value of this last concession was much diminished by the fact that cotton, which had just become an export of the southern states, was one of the articles scheduled as a principal product of the West Indies. The treaty was far from being a triumph of American diplomacy, but it was probably the best that could be obtained. Great Britain, in fact, was not afraid of America ; she was prepared to risk an American war rather than grant terms which she believed would imperil, much more seriously than such a war, her chances of victory over France. Washington saw the facts as they were, and ratified the treaty, and the result was an explosion of opposition, in Congress and outside, surpassing even the explosion over the Declaration of Neutrality two years before.

While Jay was in England (1794), the old anarchy of the 'eighties once more raised its head. The backwoodsmen of Pennsylvania decided to refuse to pay an excise which Hamilton had levied on whisky. They prepared, in fact, to treat the Federal government as the states had treated the old pre-Union Congress. Washington raised an army of 15,000 men, and the rebellion vanished out of existence without the loss of a single life. Jefferson had said some years before : " A little rebellion is a good thing and ought not to be too much discouraged. . . . The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and of tyrants." Washington and Hamilton did not share this opinion.

In his dealings with the only nation besides England which held territory on the mainland of North America, Washington was triumphantly successful. Spain had taken over Louisiana from France at the end of the Seven Years War, and closed the mouth of the Mississippi to the ships of American settlers on its upper reaches. Washington had for a long time been very well content to postpone the raising of this question. He saw the importance of linking the west by commercial bonds with the eastern coast, and he felt that

the closure of the Mississippi, though commercially vexatious, was politically wholesome, until the Union was strong. By 1794, however, he felt that the time had come for action, and Pinckney, his envoy at the Spanish court, secured freedom of navigation on the river, and the right to a place of deposit at the port of New Orleans.

In 1792 Washington had consented to stand for a second term of office as President, but when the second term drew to a close he refused to stand again. He was old, and his work was done. Finance had been stabilised, foreign relations placed upon a footing of dignity, and the success of the Union assured. He retired into private life in 1797, at the age of sixty-five.

(vi) PERMANENCE OF THE WORK OF WASHINGTON AND HAMILTON

Washington survived his retirement from the presidency by rather less than three years. Once more he was called on to serve his country. In 1798 a fresh alarm of foreign war arose, this time against France, whose government, the notorious Directory, soon afterwards blown into space by Napoleon, had insulted and attempted to extort money from American envoys. Washington consented to accept his old post of commander-in-chief, on condition that Hamilton was appointed his senior subordinate. Hamilton would have had no particular objection to war on this occasion. Spain was the ally of France, and, whereas American hostilities against France would necessarily have been limited to naval skirmishes with such French ships as could elude the vigilance of the British navy, a Spanish war would have led to the conquest of Florida and Louisiana.[1] However, war was successfully avoided.

[1] Five years later, in 1803, during Jefferson's presidency, Louisiana was purchased from Napoleon, who had previously taken it from Spain. Florida was similarly purchased from Spain in 1814.

When Washington died, in December 1799, the voice of petulance and jealousy was hushed at last. And it may be recorded to the credit of both England and France that the trophies of Napoleon's victories were decked with crêpe, and the flags of the British Channel fleet were hung at half-mast, in honour of the great man who had, at different times, so steadfastly withstood the policies of both countries. This was well done, for in truth a unique figure had passed away. Whether he was unique in the high quality of his statesmanship may be disputed, though it is difficult to find another public career extending over a period of twenty-two years, which presents no great failure of head or heart; but at least he was unique in this, that no other modern statesman but Washington can be termed, without absurdity, the Father of his Country.

Hamilton's end was very different. In January 1795 he had retired from his post of Secretary to the Treasury. His special task as a financier was discharged, and as regards policy in general, his influence out of office, as a pamphleteer and as Washington's friend, was likely to continue to surpass that of any Cabinet Minister. His salary had been far short of his expenses, and he decided to devote the remainder of his life to earning, at the bar, the money required to pay his debts, and to provide for his family. Adams, and not Hamilton, was elected as Washington's successor, for he was supposed to be a "safe" man, and the Americans had already begun to show their preference for mediocrity in the presidential chair.[1] Adams, however, proved a blunderer, and succeeded in splitting from top to bottom the Federalist party, as the followers of Washington and Hamilton had come to be

[1] Three Presidents of the last sixty years have been men of first-rate eminence. Of these, Lincoln was elected because he was supposed to be harmless, in preference to Seward, who was regarded as the leading man of the Republican party. Roosevelt became President by accident, having been elected Vice-President to McKinley (a mediocrity of the first water), who was assassinated by an anarchist. Wilson was made President because he was supposed to be a worthy and dignified professor of history, and state governor.

called. At last the road was open for the rival, or Democratic, party, and Jefferson made his triumphal entry in the presidential election of 1800.

Yet a curious accident marred his triumph. In accordance with the constitution, the candidate receiving the largest total of votes became President, and the candidate second on the list, Vice-President.[1] The Democratic party was well drilled, and its two candidates, Jefferson and Burr, received the same number of votes. It now lay, constitutionally, with the House of Representatives to determine which of the two should be President, and this fact threw the decision into the hands of Hamilton's party. Jefferson had been Hamilton's most bitter and unscrupulous enemy; Hamilton no doubt despised him, as a sentimentalist and more than half a humbug, but he preferred him to Burr, who was a mere adventurer, without principles of any kind. Moreover, it was Jefferson, and not Burr, that the Democratic party had intended to make President. Hamilton had no doubt as to his duty; he overcame the natural inclination of his followers to score over their successful rivals, and secured the election of Jefferson. He also secured, four years later, an amendment to the constitution which arranged that the President and Vice-President should be chosen by separate ballots. This was Hamilton's last achievement, for Burr was determined on revenge. He challenged Hamilton to a duel, and shot him dead. Hamilton had reached the age of forty-seven; but the great work of his statesmanship had been achieved before he reached the age of forty.

In one particular the American constitution had been, with intention, ambiguously drafted. Did its acceptance by the several states bind those states to perpetual membership, or did they retain the right to undo what they had done? A definite answer in the first sense, embodied in the clauses of the constitution, would have wrecked the chances of

[1] The Vice-President is chairman of the Senate. Otherwise he has no duties, except to take the President's place if the latter dies, or is incapacitated during his term of office.

acceptance in 1788, so no definite answer was given. Jefferson had discovered that " state rights " was as popular a party cry as " democracy," and had therefore emblazoned it on the banners of his party. In 1798 the state of Kentucky[1] had protested against certain repressive measures which the Federal government had taken, in view of the imminence of war with France, and Jefferson had drafted the " Kentucky Resolutions," which proclaimed the right of each state to " nullify " any act of the Federal government of which it disapproved. As the repressive legislation against which Kentucky protested was never enforced, owing to the abatement of the war scare, the Kentucky resolutions were never tested in action. Thirty years later, in 1828, when the Federal government introduced a high protective tariff, the great cotton state of South Carolina revived, against the tariff, the principle of Nullification. It so happened that Andrew Jackson, who was elected president that same year, was an exceedingly resolute man. He declared that Union must be preserved, and made preparations to preserve it by force ; and South Carolina gave way.

But another question was already troubling the states, the question of slavery. This is no place to state in detail the complex developments of that question. Slavery had been legalised, with regret, in the Southern States by the terms of the Union. At that date, reputable statesmen of all parties disapproved of slavery, and entertained a genuine conviction that, in course of time, it would die a natural death. But the immense development of the cotton industry had falsified these expectations. As the Union spread westwards, slavery spread with it, and a compromise was reached, whereby slave and free states were admitted to the Union in pairs, and slavery was prohibited north of an arbitrary line of latitude. After 1850 the South was determined, for reasons of its own,

[1] Kentucky had been admitted to the Union as a state in 1792, being the first new state created after the Union, and the first state on the western side of the Alleghanies. Previously it had been part of Virginia.

to break down this compromise, and secure an extension of slavery. In 1860 a Northern President, Lincoln, was elected, and the slave states, realising that their policy was doomed to defeat, determined to exercise what they regarded as their right to withdraw from the Union.

Thus came about the great Civil War, in which both sides fought with a desperate courage very unlike the conduct of the states in the War of Independence. As Lincoln always and rightly maintained, the war was not a war against slavery, but a war to maintain the Union, which was threatened by the refusal of the slave states to abide by the will of the lawfully elected Federal government. It was, in fact, a war to test the durability of the work of Washington and Hamilton, and Lincoln's triumph is also the posthumous triumph of the two greatest of his predecessors in American statesmanship.

VII

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (1769-1821)

(i) THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

NAPOLEON has been described, again and again, as the " heir " of the French Revolution, and the description, by becoming hackneyed, has not ceased to be true. In order to understand his statesmanship, we have first to understand something of the Revolution. What were the causes of the Revolution ? What were its aims ? How far had it succeeded in realising those aims ? The immense power of Napoleon is not merely the result of his genius. Genius, set in opposition to the popular will, leads to the scaffold, and its achievement is only posthumous reputation. Napoleon wielded immense power in his lifetime because he used his genius to divine what the French people wanted, and to give it to them. It might, in fact, be said that Napoleon was the greatest statesman of his age, simply because, better than any other man, he understood the Revolution. He understood what the Revolution was trying and failing to do ; unceremoniously, then, he shouldered aside that bloodstained bungler, and, with something of the suspicious rapidity of a conjurer, performed its task himself.

The roots of the French Revolution lay deep in the past history of France. Here, it must suffice to pick up one or two points from the earlier essay on Richelieu. The purpose of Richelieu had been to create a strong central government in the hands of the King. His enemy had been feudalism.

He had succeeded in depriving the feudal noble of his power, but he had not ventured to deprive him of his privileges, his exemptions from direct taxation, his right to make himself a nuisance to all his neighbours by his feudal dues, his feudal tolls, and his feudal monopolies, his right to be the only seller of wine upon his estates, and to own the only baking oven, his right to keep pigeons and feed them on his neighbours' crops.[1] All these privileges, which had once been payment from the Crown for service rendered, were converted by Richelieu into hush-money, a bribe to the feudal noble to keep quiet, and accept with resignation the disappearance of his power.

And if the noble had changed his character with the passing of the Middle Ages, still more so had the peasant changed. While nobles fought and grew poor, peasants worked and grew relatively rich. Little by little, with incredible industry, the French peasant established himself as an owner on the lands where he had formerly worked as a serf; long before the Revolution France was a land of peasant proprietors. But the lord, though he had sold the land, had not sold, and could not sell, his feudal rights over it. The land belonged to the peasant, but it was within the lord's estate, and there had to be paid tolls on the land, and tolls on the crops, tolls for the upkeep of boundary marks, roads, bridges. And when the peasant had finished with the bailiff of the lord, the agents of the Church would appear, and there would be more to be paid away. Such were the results of Richelieu's fatal compromise with feudalism.

After Richelieu came Louis XIV., and sixty years of that brilliant and expensive personage ruined France in men and money. Long wars, such as those of Louis XIV., can only be financed by loans or the equivalent of loans. Louis's government largely relied on the pernicious expedient of

[1] This last was a very bitter grievance in many rural areas. Many nobles drew a good income from pigeon-dealing under these favourable circumstances. See Sydney Herbert's *Fall of the Feudalism in France*.

selling exemptions from taxation. The French, like the Germans, have long had a curious passion for the acquisition of small official posts under the government. These Louis XIV. created by shoals, and put up to auction. No services were attached to these posts, only the privilege of exemption from taxation. These office-holders, were, in fact, technically nobles.[1] From time to time, the government would abolish every title or office created during a period of years, and put them up to auction afresh. Thus, the investment was not without its risks, and "repudiation," to-day associated with red revolutionism, was a recognised element in the politics of the old French monarchy. Much also could be sold besides exemptions from taxation. Anything might be sold by the government, provided the government first stole it, and the owner felt that it was worth getting back. For example, the self-governing privileges of the towns were continually abolished, redeemed, and abolished again.

Such were the financial methods of the Bourbons. They were the results of a system which excluded from direct taxation an ever-growing class drawn from the wealthiest sections of the population. In 1789 about 270,000 persons are supposed to have possessed privileges. The result was not so much a despotism as an anarchy; "prodigal anarchy" was a phrase used to describe it as long before the Revolution as 1750. Richelieu's administrative machine, with its Council of State, intendants, and sub-delegates, worked away in the midst of the confusion, but it worked in circumstances that made efficiency impossible.

During the long and dismal reign of Louis XV. there came into prominence and power a group, or rather several groups, of political writers, the like of whom had never been seen in the world before. They were intensely interested in political theory, but totally unacquainted with practical administration; for few men of discernment were likely to devote

[1] They are usually termed "les anoblis," "the ennobled class," *i.e.* nobles by privilege, middle-class men by social status.

themselves to administrative work in the France of Louis XV. Their chief watchwords were " Reason " and " Nature," words which, in their pages, came to mean more or less the same thing. Their chief weapon was ridicule. They were not reformers, for they regarded the existing system as damned beyond hope of redemption. They were not consciously, for the most part, revolutionists, for few, if any, of them either desired or expected a popular upheaval. They were certainly not democrats, for they regarded the popular intelligence with contempt, and idealised enlightened despotism such as that of their contemporary, Frederick the Great of Prussia. They were " utopians," and they poured a torrent of contempt upon every institution and every tradition, political and religious. Their works became the favourite reading even of those classes who dwelt within the shelter of the now " quaking house of privilege."

Somewhat apart from the rest, and more influential than all the others put together, was Rousseau. Rousseau taught that civilisation, so-called, was an evil, because it had been perverted from the first into an instrument of oppression. In the beginning, he wrote, with that simplicity of intense conviction which made him one of the most influential writers the world has ever seen : In the beginning men were equal and happy. Then came " the arts," and, with the arts, property, and its inevitable accompaniment, robbery. The rich persuaded the poor that it was in the interests of all to establish laws protecting the property of the rich. And so we started on wrong lines. " People went on repairing and patching, instead of which it was indispensable to begin again, by making a clean surface, and throwing aside all the old material." Sovereignty belongs to the people, and nothing can take it away from them. Any government is a dismissable servant. The sovereign people, if it wants to enjoy liberty and equality, and to be happy again, must dismiss its present government and find another.

Voltaire and the earlier writers, men for the most part of

birth and education, had made existing institutions look ridiculous. Rousseau, a queer vagabond adventurer without education, had done much more; he had made them look wicked. He gave inspired expression to a vague yet passionate discontent, painting, as he did, the black iniquities of civilisation, not with the resigned fatalism of a theologian, but as accidents, the results of man's blunders, and by man almost easily to be remedied, when once he had girded himself to the effort.

It was the American War that finally toppled the French government over into bankruptcy. Unless the nobility could be taxed, government must collapse. Mediaeval precedents for action were ransacked, and, in accordance with one of these, an Assembly of Notables (leading nobles) was summoned, in 1787, to discuss the problem that Richelieu had not been strong enough to solve. "Could the nobility be taxed?"—an uncomfortable question to address to the nobility. La Fayette, full of Washingtonian ideals, suggested the revival of the ancient French parliament, the summoning of the Estates General. The Estates General met in 1789, and, after sundry bickerings with the Houses of the Nobles and of the Clergy, the Third Estate, elected by the mass of the people, proclaimed itself a National Assembly,[1] and declared that it would not dissolve until it had made a constitution.

Thereby, on June 17th, 1789, the French Revolution was begun. It is, of course, quite impossible to follow here, even in the barest outline, the extraordinary series of complicated events that crowd the ten-and-a-half years between that day and November 11th, 1799, when General Bonaparte expelled with his soldiery the last successors of that National Assembly. We must deal with the matter only in the most general way, trying to give simple answers to certain fundamental questions.

[1] Soon after, it renamed itself the Constituent Assembly, *i.e.* the Assembly for making a Constitution.

First, what were the ideas and aspirations of the French nation, when they elected what became the National Assembly? We have plenty of material for answering this question, as the constituencies had not only to elect their candidates, but also to draw up *cahiers*, political programmes or statements of grievances. Generally speaking, when all the *cahiers* are examined, two general demands are found to predominate; the demand for equality or the abolition of feudalism, and the demand for a constitution. By a constitution, the writers of the *cahiers* mean no more than a simple, stable, orderly system of government; they are not demanding a constitution in the English sense of a government controlled by an elected parliament. Another feature of the *cahiers* is their vigorous royalism. Let the good king have a chance to know and to rule his people, and all will be well.

Such was the original impulse, pure and unalloyed, of the French Revolution. It demanded two immense reforms, "equality" and a "constitution," and it demanded the King as its leader. But the King was Louis XVI., and he could not lead; there lay the tragedy for all concerned. It was ten-and-a-half years before the writers of the *cahiers* found their king, and he was not a Bourbon, but a Bonaparte.

The leadership, which the King refused, devolved upon a parliament of political novices, alternately thrilled and terrified by the Parisian mob, which, by the sensational exploit of destroying the Bastille, proved that the Revolution had an army of sorts at its back—perhaps, on its back. Mirabeau, noble by birth, but revolutionist by sentiment, saw that the best chance for France was to create as quickly as possible and establish as firmly as possible, a constitution on English lines. Let the King accept the advice of the Assembly, which was most anxious to co-operate with him, and let the leader of the Assembly, Mirabeau himself, become Prime Minister. Then Louis XVI., Mirabeau, and the National Assembly would reproduce on the French

side of the channel the admirable partnership of George III., Pitt, and the House of Commons, the only difference being that the French Assembly was democratic and the English was largely dominated by borough-owners. The National Assembly had already abolished feudalism; if Mirabeau could have succeeded, the threefold aim of the Revolution might have been secured in a few months.

He failed. The King did not trust him, and the Assembly was jealous of him. Further, the King distrusted the Assembly as insincere, believing it to be in secret co-operation with the mob, and the Assembly distrusted the King as insincere, believing him to be in secret co-operation with the nobles. Neither party was, in fact, above suspicion, and the Revolution had thrown up no great character to lead it. Mirabeau was clever and noisy, a compound of rhetoric and intrigue, but not a man to be trusted.

In 1790 Mirabeau and the Assembly took a step which ruined the chances of constitutional monarchy. They had already disendowed the Church and stripped it of its feudal privileges. That was in accord with the original programme of the Revolution. Now, however, they proceeded to force upon the Church a civil constitution—bishops to be elected by the clergy of their dioceses, etc. This foolish experiment was not only contrary to the will of the King; it was in flat contradiction to the will of the Catholic majority of the French nation. It marked the beginning of religious persecution.

In 1791 Mirabeau died, having already failed. The King tried to escape from what had become an imprisonment at the hands of his subjects, and was captured and brought back. In September, the "New Constitution" was completed and inaugurated—a constitution on English lines, a monarchy with a constitutional king. But "popular monarchy,"[1] such as England has developed, cannot be

[1] It is time to protest against the use of the term "limited monarchy" to describe the constitution of modern England. That phrase fits a period (such as that of William III. to George III.), in which the king's political authority still existed, though it was limited by that

had ready made, and the royal hero of 1789 was already a predestined Charles I., an enemy of his parliament and a martyr for his church.

With the new constitution came a new parliament, the Legislative Assembly from which, by an insane "Self Denying Ordinance," everyone who had had the benefit of experience in the Constituent Assembly, was excluded. This new parliament was dominated, far more than the old, by Rousseauite enthusiasts, determined to carry their gospel of freedom to the ends of the earth. In fact, the new French enthusiasm for humanity was quickening into life the old enthusiasm for extension of frontiers, henceforth called, in deference to the jargon of the day, "natural" frontiers. Of the leaders in the Legislative Assembly, the so-called Girondins, some desired war because they thought it would unite the King with his parliament, more, because they thought it would prove his treason against the country and lead to his overthrow. It is never difficult to pick a quarrel with one's neighbours in Europe, and war with Austria and Prussia began in April 1792.

The situation on the north-east frontier of France had greatly altered since the days of Richelieu. The once great power of Spain had shrunk to nothingness and hidden itself behind the Pyrenees. The Dutch were weak and inoffensive. Belgium was an Austrian province in a state of smouldering rebellion against its rulers, and full of sympathisers with the ideas of the Revolution. The great powers of Germany, Austria and Prussia lay far back to the east, jealous of each other and of Russia, and engrossed in the fascinating problem of partitioning Poland. Between them and France lay a

of a rival body. When once the rival body, Parliament, has absorbed the King's political authority in its entirety, the phrase "limited monarchy" becomes absurd. "Popular monarchy" would be perhaps a satisfactory substitute. The precise point at which the monarchy passed from the "limited" to the "popular" stage may be hard to determine. But so is the point at which a male human being passes from boyhood to manhood; yet that is not allowed as a reason for calling him a boy at fifty.

medley of small misgoverned feudal principalities, bishoprics, and free cities, a mosaic of political curiosities,[1] whose subjects, in many cases, were ready to welcome French arms as an aid to the destruction of the feudalism that oppressed them. German national feeling had died long ago, and had not yet been reborn.

French armies were not likely to encounter any very vigorous or powerful enemy; but at the moment French armies barely existed, being dissolved into revolutionary mobs, and the Austrians and Prussians invaded France. This first invasion did not last long, but it lasted long enough to produce the overthrow of the monarchy. The King dismissed his Girondin ministry, and stood revealed to the world as the enemy of the Revolution. The Assembly was paralysed; but the Parisian mob took action and stormed the Tuileries. The King was first "suspended," then deposed, and France became a "Republic," an event as unexpected and undesired in 1789 as an English Republic had been in the England of 1642, when the Great Rebellion began. A new parliament, the Convention, was elected to make another new constitution. France meanwhile was governed by the first of a long series of despotic Committees, which knew no master save their ally, the Parisian mob.

The year we are entering upon (August 1792 to August 1793) is dominated by the massive figure of Danton. Like Mirabeau, Danton had many of the qualities of a great man, and he was certainly a more successful leader. He was no theorist or party man, but a great patriot. It was he who carried through the first great conscription. He "stamped with his foot and France rose in arms."[2] He is often presented in history as more of a beast than a human being, but he was a lover of Shakespeare and Dante, and the great phrases of his oratory have the ring of true metal. "Il nous

[1] The phrase is from Fyffe's *Modern Europe*.

[2] Belloc, *Life of Danton*.

faut de l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace, et la France sera sauvée." But he was callous of human life, and he could not afford to whip back into its kennel his ally the mob, when it disgraced the revolutionary cause by the September massacres. In that autumn of 1792 the invasion was rolled incredibly back, and French armies overran Belgium, and entered Mainz. It was but natural to attribute to the might of France what was really due to the weakness of the forces against her. In December the Convention, contrary to Danton's advice, declared that in every country occupied by the armies of the Revolution, the general in command should announce the abolition of all existing authorities, and proclaim the sovereignty of the people. Early in the next year war was declared against Great Britain, Holland, Spain, and various Italian States. The limited programme of 1789 had become, in less than four years, a crusade for the destruction of all the old European aristocracies.

In 1793 came a second invasion, and a crisis far more formidable than that of 1792. The most successful of French commanders, a Swiss mercenary named Dumouriez, deserted to the enemy, and five armies invaded French territory. The west of France rose in rebellion for Church and King, and also to avoid conscription. In the south, Lyons, Bordeaux, and Toulon rose, and the last-named admitted the British fleet to its harbour. The Revolution had, in fact, ceased to be French; it had become Parisian, and the immense prestige of Paris was for the moment broken. Just as in 1792 it had been necessary to establish a republic if the Revolution was to be saved from its enemies, so now it was necessary to establish a tyranny of martial law, directed from Paris,—that tyranny which has come to be called the Terror. On one side was the despotic Executive Committee, the Committee of Public Safety, ruled by Danton and backed by the Jacobin Society, with its extraordinary network of political clubs spread all over the country and ruled by the leaders in Paris;

on the other side was the Convention, representing France and shrinking from measures that would make "Liberty" even more of a mockery than it was already. The majority in the Convention still bowed to the prestige and eloquence of the Girondin idealists. Of course, the Committee won; the Convention was "purged," and the Girondin party broken in pieces.

During the spring and summer of 1793 the Revolution was beset, not only by foreign armies and domestic rebellions, but also, of course, by thousands of secret enemies;—spies, traitors, and would-be assassins, if you like; or, if you prefer, brave men who were prepared to dare all in order to rescue their country from the grip of a monstrous tyranny. The organ of the Terror as now established, the Revolutionary Tribunal with its powers of life and death, was intended by Danton for no other purpose than to protect the government in its struggle for existence. But it was doubtful if he could maintain control of the system he had been mainly responsible for establishing. In July, Marat, the most virulent of Jacobin journalists, was assassinated by a young woman from the Catholic and Royalist west. Never was an assassination better justified by its motives, or more condemned by its results. It started the cry for reprisals on a scale unheard of before. Danton lost control, and Robespierre stepped into his place.

The year that follows (August 1793-1794) is a year of triumphs on all the frontiers, for Danton's levies, organised by the great war minister, Carnot, once more carried all before them; but in Paris it is a year of homicidal mania. Robespierre presided, a sheer fanatic with a faith in his star equal to that of Napoleon, and nearly equal to that of any inmate of an asylum. It was then that Rousseau's counsel to "throw aside all the old rubbish and begin again," was taken fully to heart. Christianity itself was abolished, and a new revolutionary era founded, with a new calendar, whose picturesque nomenclature troubles the historian until

Napoleon abolished it ten years later.[1] And all this was done to the sound of the tumbrils and the clank of the guillotine.

In June 1794 came a great victory over the Austrians at Fleurus, in Belgium, and it was plain that France would not tolerate the Terror much longer. So the more prudent of the Jacobins turned upon the more fanatical, and sent Robespierre and his friends to follow their victims to the guillotine (the coup d'état of *Thermidor*, July 1794). The situation was now such that almost anything might have come out of it. The country was saved from foreign invasion; Prussia and all the belligerents except Austria and England were preparing to make peace, and neither England nor Austria had done anything to suggest that their hostility was likely to be either formidable or prolonged. The French people, freed from the shackles of feudalism and enriched with the spoils of the nobility and the Church, asked for

[1] Some knowledge of this calendar is made necessary by the fact that many of the events of the next few years are named after the "revolutionary" month in which they occurred, just as battles are named after the villages near which they are fought. The new era was ante-dated so as to begin September 22, 1792, the date of the proclamation of the Republic. There were twelve months of thirty days each, divided into three decades (the week being abolished as being a Christian institution). Five extra days (six in leap year) were added after the completion of the twelve months, to complete each year. Roughly speaking, each revolutionary month begins about the twentieth day of one of our months, and the table that follows gives, opposite the name of each "revolutionary" the name of the months of our calendar in which it begins and ends. The names of the revolutionary months are, of course, suggestive of the weather or the agricultural activity associated with the various periods of the year.

Vendémiaire	(the vintage month)	September/October.
Brumaire	(the fog month)	October/November.
Frimaire	(the frost month)	November/December.
Nivôse	(the snow month)	December/January.
Pluviôse	(the rain month)	January/February.
Ventôse	(the wind month)	February/March.
Germinal	(the seed month)	March/April.
Floréal	(the flower month)	April/May.
Prairial	(the meadow month)	May/June.
Messidor	(the reaping month)	June/July.
Thermidor	(the heat month)	July/August.
Fructidor	(the fruit month)	August/September.

nothing but a " constitution," and by a constitution, now as ever, they meant nothing more nor less than an established and orderly government, ruling in the interests, not of " the Revolution," but of the French people. A restoration of monarchy still seemed to most Frenchmen far the best and safest solution, but it must be a monarchy that would recognise and accept the abolition of feudalism, and confirm in their ownership the purchasers of the old feudal and ecclesiastical estates. This was, however, just what the Bourbons, in their exile, could not bring themselves to do ; they preferred to throw in their lot with the *émigré* nobles and with the enemies of France.

This stupidity on the part of the royal family enabled the enemies of a restoration to retain their hold on the government. This governing clique was made up of a variety of groups, all closely linked by common interests. First there were the politicians in power themselves, Jacobins, Regicides, Terrorists, whose past had cut them off from any hope of sharing in the clemency of a restoration. Most of them felt that for them the alternatives were power or the scaffold. Then there were the soldiers, to whom the new democratic armies, where promotion was rapid and went by merit, had opened a brilliant and fascinating career. All the soldiers loved the war, for those who did not do so quickly deserted, and returned to the ranks of the civilian population. The army would support the Jacobins so long as the Jacobins would keep the war going. Lastly, there were the profiteers, the *nouveaux riches*, who had made their fortunes by swindling the government over war contracts. These would support the Jacobins so long as the Jacobins made it worth their while.

Thus the term " the Revolution " had come to stand for two quite different, and in many respects contrasted, groups of aims. In the nobler sense " the Revolution " still meant the programme of 1789, the maintenance of the new " Equality " born of the overthrow of feudalism.

This was what " the Revolution " meant to the ordinary middle-class and lower-class Frenchman, and he longed to see " the Revolution " secured by a return to stable and orderly government. In its narrower and baser sense " the Revolution " now meant also the maintenance in power of the comparatively small groups, military and political, who had got control of the revolutionary government and made it minister to their own power and profit.

(ii) VENDÉMIAIRE TO BRUMAIRE (1795-1799)

Towards the end of the summer of 1795, more than a year after the overthrow of Robespierre, the Convention, or rather so much of it as had survived the Reign of Terror, had finished its task of constructing a Republican constitution. This constitution, known to history as the Directory, is closely linked with the career of Napoleon, for he supervised its birth, perverted its youth, and finally gave it its death blow. The leading motives of the authors of this constitution were fear of the tyranny of the executive and fear of the passions of the people. The chief features were: (i) a parliament of two Houses, both elected by a restricted, or " bourgeois," franchise, the Upper House, called " the Ancients," consisting of members over forty years of age; the Lower House, called the Council of Five Hundred; (ii) an executive consisting of five directors, elected by the Ancients, and assisted by ministers appointed by themselves; (iii) elections to be held every year for one-third of the seats in each of the two Houses; similarly, the directors to retire in rotation, one every year, the place of the retiring director being filled by election, by the Ancients.

If the constitution, as thus described, had ever been honestly allowed to work, it would have at any rate given the French people an opportunity of showing what kind of government they wanted. But that was just what the authors of the constitution, the " rump " of the Convention, the

revolutionists in office, were most concerned to avoid, and, at the last moment, a clause was inserted stating that two-thirds of the members of the new Assembly must be chosen from among the members of the Convention. At this impudent perversion of the electoral principles of the new constitution, the Parisian mob once more rose in rebellion. The Convention entrusted its defence to General Bonaparte, because he happened to be on the spot, and because Barras, the politician entrusted with the duty of finding a commander, happened to have met him before, at the siege of Toulon. Bonaparte brought heavy guns into the streets of Paris and blew the mob to bits. For the first time since the fall of the Bastille, the mob had met its master. This is the coup d'état of *Vendémiaire* (October 1795).

" Buona Parte—who the devil is he ? " An answer to this question, much asked in Paris during the days that followed the coup d'état of *Vendémiaire*, must now be given. Buonaparte (for he spelt his name thus until the year following *Vendémiaire*) came of an ancient Florentine stock, which had migrated to Corsica in 1529. He was the second son in a large family, and was born in 1769, a year after Corsica, previously subject to the republic of Genoa, had become French territory. His father had at first supported the cause of Corsican independence, but he afterwards made himself sufficiently agreeable to the French authorities to secure a salaried post for himself, and for his son, Napoleon, admission to the French military academy at Brienne. Thither Napoleon went at the age of ten (1779), and, six years later, passed into the French army. During the next ten years (1785-1795) he appears to lead a double life, half French and half Corsican, for his prolonged furloughs were devoted to supporting the interests of his family, and to futile interventions in " routs and discomfitures, rushes and rallies," which constituted political life in his native island. Only a few features need be noticed. He worked exceedingly hard,

reading deeply in the classics (translated), history, military history, military science, and the works of Rousseau. From the first he was a revolutionist of the advanced wing, and during the Reign of Terror he supported Robespierre. He published various pamphlets, of which the best, *Le Souper de Beaucaire*, is a dialogue, written in 1793, advocating support of the Jacobin government against its multitudinous enemies. At the end of the same year he made his mark as a captain of artillery at the siege of Toulon, which had revolted against the despotism of Paris, and had admitted the English fleet to its harbour. But this success was followed by disasters. He disobeyed an order to proceed to La Vendée (the scene of the royalist rebellion in the west) as commander of an infantry division, and, on coming to Paris to seek more congenial work, had his name erased from the list of general officers, for insubordination. This was just three weeks before the coup d'état of *Vendémiaire*. That event changed all his prospects, and he now found himself saluted as the saviour of France ; more accurately, he might be described as the saviour of the revolutionists in office.

Four years and a month lie between this event and that other coup d'état of *Brumaire* 1799, whereby General Bonaparte abolished the government whose existence he had in 1795 secured. The detail of the period is complicated, but the general principles that explain it are exceedingly simple. A corrupt bargain had been struck between the revolutionists in office and the leading army officers, of whom Bonaparte quickly became the most brilliant and popular representative. The soldiers would maintain the government, so long as the government would maintain an aggressive foreign policy. Such an alliance could not be maintained against the French people for an indefinite period ; no one could tell what would happen when the alliance broke down ; probably, it might seem, a royalist restoration. For no one could have supposed as yet that, within the head of the dingy [1]

[1] Descriptions of Bonaparte's personal appearance at this date seem to justify the epithet "dingy."

NAPOLEON

From an engraving by G. Fiesinger, after Jean Guérin

and bloodstained "hero" of *Vendémiaire*, there lay the capacities of a Caesar.

Among the five Directors at the head of the new government was Carnot, the admirable war minister who had completed what was begun by Danton in 1793 and 1794. To him Bonaparte presented his plans for a campaign against Austria in northern Italy, in which country Austria had held the province of Lombardy ever since the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713. As a result, he received the command of the army in Italy. His attitude towards the great opportunity now presented to him may be illustrated by a few quotations from his own words. When, a few months later, he entered Milan as a conqueror, he proclaimed: "Peoples of Italy, the French army comes to break your chains; the French people is the friend of all peoples. We make war only on the tyrants who have enslaved you." However, he also said, on a less public occasion: "We do not make war in the interests of other people. I know it costs nothing to a handful of talkers and idealogues to wish for a universal republic. I should like these gentlemen to come and make a winter campaign." Yet again, to his soldiers at the opening of the campaign: "Soldiers, you are half-starved and half-naked. The Government owes you much, but can do nothing for you. I am about to lead you into the most fertile valleys of the world; there you will reap honour, glory, and riches. Soldiers of the Army of Italy, will you lack courage?" Yet it would be a mistake to regard Napoleon as a mere freebooter, hypocritically pretending to "free" the people he has come to rob. Italy was for Bonaparte what Gaul was for Caesar, the land where he won his dazzling military renown, and made for himself a position from which he could force an irresistible entry upon a career of statesmanship. Both inflicted cruel wounds on the people among whom they were fighting, but, just as the history of civilised France begins with the campaigns of Caesar, so the far shorter history of united Italy begins with the campaigns of Napoleon.

As 1796 advanced, first one Italian village and then another familiarised its name in Paris as the scene of a victory of this incredible Bonaparte—Lodi, Lonato, Castiglione, Arcola, Rivoli ; then the fall of the great fortress of Mantua, the pursuit of the Austrians through the passes of the Tirol, and the dictating of peace (treaty of Campo Formio, 1797) within eighty miles of Vienna. The achievement seemed all the greater inasmuch as the other French armies, in Germany, had met the only good Austrian general, the Archduke Charles, and had been rolled back behind the Rhine. By the Treaty of Campo Formio Belgium and the western half of Lombardy became French territory ; the rest of Lombardy and part of the republic of Venice were formed into a Cisalpine Republic ; the remainder of the Venetian territory, with the city of Venice itself, was handed over to Austria. The Venetians had, it is true, observed a strict neutrality throughout the war, but their territory was now wanted, and, to give the thing a better appearance, Bonaparte hired an Italian to forge a proclamation, purporting to come from the Venetian government, which urged the population to rise and massacre the French.[1]

Throughout all these proceedings Napoleon had treated the Directory as Nelson had treated his senior officer when he applied the telescope to his blind eye. He was, in fact, already playing his own hand in complete independence of authority, like the great Roman soldiers of the last century of the Roman Republic. But, however much he might disobey his government, he could not allow it to be overthrown, and this event in 1797 seemed likely enough, unless he intervened. The great drawback of the Directory constitution, from the revolutionists' point of view, was that it allowed the French people to control its government by means of elections. In May 1797 elections for one-third of the seats in the two chambers had created a " royalist " majority, which had the support not only of the newly

[1] Rose, *Life of Napoleon I.*, p. 144.

elected Director, Barthélemy, but also of Carnot, the only men of weight and honour in the government. This "royalist" party stood for peace abroad, and a general amnesty at home; perhaps the strongest single motive animating it was a desire for the restoration of the Catholic Church. It stood, in fact, for the original programme of 1789, and for the reversal of everything that had befallen since that date.

Since the "royalists" held a majority in the Assemblies and the Jacobins a majority on the Directory, a deadlock ensued, and each party was preparing a coup d'état against the other. Bonaparte saw that no time was to be lost; but he refrained from making himself conspicuous as the chief actor in a *coup* which he knew would be odious to the vast majority of Frenchmen. Instead, he sent Augereau, one of his generals, to take control of the troops in Paris. The result was the coup d'état of *Fructidor* (September 1797). The "royalists" were expelled from the Chambers, and Barthélemy and Carnot from the Directorate. Nearly a hundred persons were sentenced to transportation to Guiana, a form of capital sentence which had superseded the more humane guillotine; but of these all but seventeen escaped, among them the two Directors.

France was now at peace with all the world save England, and the English war, apart from naval events, limited itself to problematic descents upon the English or the Irish coast. Bonaparte had an eye for sound military investments, and he held aloof from these projects; still less anxious was he to associate his name with the invidious task of fighting against Frenchmen, and subduing the unending rebellion of the west. He hit upon the plan of an expedition to Egypt, and the Directory was not sorry to see him off, with a library of learned works and a staff of scientific investigators, in May 1798.[1] He did not re-appear in France till October 1799.

[1] The significance of the Egyptian expedition is considered in section iv of this essay.

Relieved of the presence of its almost too powerful supporter, the " purged " Directory set itself to prove that as much could be done without Bonaparte as with him. Switzerland was overrun, and became the Helvetic Republic, Holland was made the Batavian Republic, the Estates of the Church the Roman Republic, and the Kingdom of Naples the Parthenopaean Republic. By this absurd nomenclature the French government paid lip service to the principles of " Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," while acting on the principles of imperialism and pillage. All these sham republics were shaped upon Bonaparte's " Cisalpine " model, and the nature of that model is indicated by the fact that Bonaparte, when presenting his new creation with a constitution on the lines of the French Directory, had taken care to nominate not only the Directors and their Ministers, but also all the members of the legislative assembly.

Meanwhile a new coalition gathered its forces, and in 1799 France was at war with Austria and Russia. In August a crushing defeat at Novi overthrew the French power in Italy at one blow. It is true that in the next month Masséna won a brilliant victory at Zurich in Switzerland ; but France was almost as weary of victories as of defeats. She was weary of war itself, of which no end could be descried.

In May 1798 the Directory had had to face another of those inconvenient elections. But this time it was ready in advance. The two Houses, acting under pressure of the Directors, held a scrutiny of the returns, excluded all objectionable candidates, and declared the persons whom these candidates had defeated at the polls elected in their place. As " royalists " had not dared to take part in the elections, the victims of this proceeding were drawn from " the left " rather than " the right." [1] So that henceforth we must distinguish the revolutionists in office, not only from the royalists and moderates on one side, but also from

[1] These terms, originated in 1789, are still in general use to describe radical and conservative tendencies respectively.

the Jacobins or " red revolutionaries " on the other. This was the Purge of *Floréal* (May 1798).

In the spring of 1799, more elections and more constitutional enormities. The newly elected Director, Sieyès, together with a majority in the two Houses, perceived that at least three of the old Directors had become intolerable in the eyes of honourable Frenchmen, and succeeded in forcing them to resign, three nonentities being intruded in their places. This is the coup d'état of *Prairial* (June 1799). Power was now in the hands of a section among the revolutionists in office, who, more intelligent than the rest, perceived that the ship of the Directory, which had kept them above the waves for nearly four years, was now hopelessly unseaworthy ; they were therefore preparing to rat from it on the first favourable opportunity. Their aim was the same as ever, to preserve the political monopoly of their clique ; only their method was new. They sought a new constitutional ship ; they also sought a soldier who would, with the aid of his strong right arm and his brilliant prestige, see them across the dangerous plank separating the old ship from the new one. Such a soldier they had hoped they might have found in Joubert, whom they sent off to win a new Rivoli in Italy ; but his Rivoli had been defeat and death at Novi. Possibly they would have to fall back on Bonaparte, if he ever returned from Egypt. They would have preferred a more docile " war-god," but the other " war-gods " were barely intelligent enough for the subtle service required of them.

The leader of this party was Sieyès, and behind him, uncommitted and benevolently neutral, were two far abler men, Talleyrand and Fouché. Sieyès was, in reality, little better than a pompous fool, but his intense sense of his own importance, his gift for dry epigram, and the cunning with which he timed his rare interventions in revolutionary politics, had won him reputation as a sage, who had long meditated upon the ideal constitution, and had stored it,

complete and ready-made, in the back of his head. He it was who had written the famous pamphlet, " What is the Tiers État? It is the French Nation," which had influenced events in 1789. He it was who had played second fiddle to Mirabeau on the famous occasion of the oath in the tennis court which proclaimed the National Assembly. He it was who, when asked what he had done during the Reign of Terror, had replied, " J'ai vécu." [1]

For Talleyrand and Fouché it is difficult not to feel a sneaking affection, so many high-principled historians have so fervently denounced their wickedness. Fouché was a model husband and a model father, but in other respects, no doubt, an odious creature. He had been one of the worst of the Terrorists, and also the chief author of the coup d'état of *Thermidor*, which terminated the Terror, and thus saved the Terrorists, other than Robespierre's little clique, from the doom that would soon have fallen upon them. He was, from certain points of view, the ideal Minister of Police. His spies knew everything. No one was so skilled as he in converting a conspirator into a police agent. Moreover, his police cost the government remarkably little, being almost entirely maintained by the blackmail they extorted from the criminals they supervised. He was Napoleon's Minister of Police for the greater part of ten years, and after Waterloo he was rewarded for his services to Louis XVIII. by a brief return to his old office. He died enormously rich.

Talleyrand was an aristocrat and had once been a bishop, though never a believer in the doctrines of the Church; he was a bishop because an accident in infancy had damaged his foot and rendered him incapable of bearing arms. He had been one of the leaders of the party of moderation in 1789, and in 1792 he had done his best, as an agent of the French

[1] Sieyès' name is often wrongly accented in English books, and its pronunciation offers difficulties. As regards the latter, a clue is furnished by the fact that, on the occasion of one of Sieyès' numerous disappearances from the political scene, a punster chalked up on his door, " Si es, ubi es ? "

government in London, to avoid the English war; for he always cherished that dislike of war which characterises the really great diplomatist. The whole period of the Terror he spent in the United States, where he conceived the greatest admiration for the statesmanship of Hamilton. He became foreign minister of the Directory in 1797, and, for nearly ten years, served Napoleon in the same capacity. Later, he played a more important part than any other Frenchman both in arranging the restoration of Louis XVIII., and in securing for France a powerful position in the Congress of Vienna, when her enemies re-drew the map of Europe after the downfall of Napoleon. After 1830 he was French ambassador in London, and one of the chief authors of the treaty (the "scrap of paper") which established the independence and neutrality of Belgium. In his long life he told innumerable lies, but no more than Napoleon; he also readily accepted bribes, though he never allowed these to influence him so far as to lead him to put the interest of the donor above that of his country and himself. He was, in fact, a bad man, who did a great deal of highly skilled and valuable work for France.

As soon as Bonaparte landed, in October 1799, it was obvious that he, and he alone, could play the part of "the soldier" in Sieyès' conspiracy. An overwhelming and quite spontaneous outburst of joy greeted him from all sides on his return. The fact that his Egyptian expedition had been a failure was entirely ignored; that he had been there at all seemed to mark him as the wonder of the world, even more decisively than his authentic tale of victories in Italy. By a sure instinct, the French people divined that this man was something more than a successful general; already they saw in him the *deus ex machina* who would provide the happy ending to the revolutionary melodrama. On arriving in Paris he quickly accepted membership of the conspiracy, so far as the overthrow of the Directory was concerned. What was to follow that event was left conveniently vague.

The conspirators had reason to expect a certain amount of support within the government they were about to attack ; Sieyès could rely upon one of his fellow Directors ; he had also a majority of supporters in the Council of Ancients, but not in the Five Hundred. No strong public opinion was likely to support the proposed coup d'état, for France was weary of coups d'état ; but still less would any strong public opinion bestir itself in favour of the wretched Directory and its sham representative assemblies. At the worst, soldiers could be used, as at *Fructidor* ; but a purely civilian performance was considered more seemly.

It is unnecessary to tell here the story of the famous two days' *coup* of *Brumaire* (November 1799). Suffice it to say that, on the report of a fictitious Jacobin plot, the friendly Ancients appointed Bonaparte commander of the troops in Paris, and adjourned both Houses until the following day, when they were to meet in the château of Saint Cloud, five miles from Paris, and safe from the activities of the mob, should any mob bestir itself. The three unfriendly Directors were frightened into resigning their offices. The next day the Five Hundred, meeting at Saint Cloud and, refusing to give up the game as lost, were expelled from their place of assembly by soldiers armed with bayonets. In the evening of the same day, a " rump " of friendly members of the Five Hundred was collected, and bidden co-operate with the Ancients in declaring the Directory at an end, and appointing Bonaparte, Sieyès, and the other friendly Director, Ducos, as Provisional Consuls, to create a new constitution.

Now was to be answered the question whether Bonaparte was the kind of soldier-ally that Sieyès and his friends desired. Would he accept an elaborate constitutional façade, disguised to screen the fact that the old revolutionary gang was to continue to misgovern in defiance of the wishes of the French people ? The celebrated scheme of Sieyès may be described in outline as follows : the whole tax-paying population of France elected 50,000 notables, and these

notables elected 5,000 from their own number. So much for popular election. From this 5,000, a Senate, nominated in the first instance by the Provisional Consuls and afterwards maintained at its proper strength by co-option, would select the members of two Assemblies, that is to say, of a Tribunate charged with the duty of introducing and debating legislative proposals, and a Legislature charged with the duty of voting in silence on the proposals debated before it. Out of its own number the Senate were also to select a personage entitled the Great Elector, who should appoint two Consuls, one for home, and one for foreign affairs, which done he should relapse into an ornate repose. It may be that Sieyès regarded the Great Elector as ultimately convertible into a constitutional king. For the moment, however, the post was intended for Bonaparte. The whole constitution reveals itself at a glance as a monument of clumsy hypocrisy. The driving wheel of the machine is the nominated Senate, renewing itself by co-option, and this would be the stronghold of the revolutionists in office. All else was mere pretence.

Bonaparte declared that the " Great Elector " was nothing but a " fatted pig," and that he would have nothing to do with the office designed for him ; a new and better constitution must be drawn up. The new scheme, inspired by Bonaparte, abolished the Great Elector and substituted a First Consul, with complete executive control of all departments, and considerable powers of legislation by means of edicts. The Second and Third Consuls were no more than advisers, the first in rank among his ministers. For his further assistance was created a Council of State, which was really nothing less than an expert secretariat and department of research. For the rest, the Senate, the Tribunate and the Legislature might remain ; they could do no harm. Bonaparte picked all the best men available and put them into his Council of State. Sieyès was allowed the consolation of nominating the members of the Senate, the Tribunate, and the Legislature. As was to be expected, he filled them

with members of the old revolutionary gang, and thus played into Bonaparte's hands by discrediting these assemblies from the first in the eyes of the French people.

When all was ready, the new constitution, with the names of the three consuls, Bonaparte, Cambacérès, and Lebrun, was submitted to a plébiscite, or vote of the whole people. On a later occasion Bonaparte declared that constitutions ought to be short—and obscure. The constitution of the Consulate was certainly obscure, and probably many of the voters understood only one word in it. But that word sufficed, for it was "Bonaparte." Times had greatly changed since political wiseacres asked one another : " Buona Parte ! Who the devil is he ? " Long before the last record of votes arrived (for these things took a long time in the pre-railway epoch), the final result was obvious. The new government was at once inaugurated, and took charge of France on December 24th, 1799, five weeks after the coup d'état had abolished the Directory. Sieyès received a large pension, and thenceforth disappears from history.

(iii) THE CONSULATE (1799-1804)

Napoleon [1] claimed to dispense with representative assemblies, on the ground that he himself knew what France wanted and could give it her far better than any representative assembly ; and on the record of his work during the first years of the Consulate it is difficult, nay, impossible to dispute his claim. One can only deny his right to despotism by affirming, in the words of a British Prime Minister, that " self government is better than good government." This was the position that Washington maintained in all emergencies, and that Napoleon denied. Yet it is wholly false to say that Napoleon destroyed self-government, for ever since

[1] This seems the natural place to adopt the more familiar name. Actually, Bonaparte did not assume the royal prerogative of dispensing with his surname till, in 1802, his consulship, originally for ten years, was made his for life.

the establishment of the Jacobin tyranny in 1792 there had been no self-government to destroy. Parliamentary government had never been a popular aspiration of the French. Rousseau, the prophet of the Revolution, had despised it, and had looked rather to a supreme legislator who should incarnate the national will. Robespierre, a sincere fanatic, had caught at the idea and made of it a ghastly parody. Napoleon achieved it; in him Rousseau's fantastic legislator, a figure drawn from old tales of Lycurgus at Sparta and Minos in Crete, walked the earth at last. He was what the simple French electors of 1789 had desired that Louis XVI. should be.

An appalling situation confronted the new government: civil war in the west; disorder, anarchy, brigandage everywhere; trade and commerce paralysed; currency depreciated; a hundred thousand Frenchmen, among them many of the best, driven out of the country; endless and aimless wars; and, above all, the Catholic Church, which persecution had made far the most popular institution in the country, driven out of its churches and transformed into a vast conspiracy against the government. What France longed for was peace, in every sense of that word; the ending of the civil war; the restoration of order and security; peace with the foreigner, as soon as peace could be combined with honour; peace with "France beyond the frontiers," and the return of the *émigrés*; and, above all, peace with the Church. When all these things were done, the French Revolution would be accomplished, having secured what it had set out to secure, the destruction of feudalism, and "a constitution."

One of Napoleon's first decrees established complete religious liberty, exacting only from priests an oath of fidelity to the constitution, and restoring the churches to their rightful owners. Then occurred that "resurrection of the church bells," which better than anything else symbolised the inexpressible happiness and relief with which France

tingled in the first months of 1800. The establishment of religious liberty broke the back of the rebellion in the west, in which, though the leaders had been keen royalists, the rank and file had always been inspired more by religious than political motives. A combination of military and diplomatic measures brought the rebellion to an end. Of the leaders, one was shot; one, Georges Cadoudal, was afterwards the author of the most famous of Napoleonic assassination plots; most became by degrees loyal subjects of the new government.

The list of exiles, which had grown during ten years to a portentous figure, was closed, and the reverse process of recalling exiles was cautiously begun. It was necessary to proceed with circumspection, for Napoleon's government could not afford to estrange the revolutionists, who necessarily occupied most of the higher posts of government. A policy of reconciliation always breaks down if it is hurried. But hundreds of *émigrés*, divining the intentions of the new government and failing to realise its difficulties, hastened home to France without waiting for an official recall. A few of the more conspicuous were reprimanded, and ordered to return. Gradually, as the pressure from without increased, the policy of reconciliation quickened its pace. Napoleon's choice of his chief officials was typical of his policy. The Second Consul, Cambacérès, had been a regicide, the Third Consul, Lebrun, a moderate royalist. Among the judges in the Court of Appeal, one had, in 1797, sentenced another to deportation for life, at the time of the coup d'état of *Fructidor*.

In the sphere of local government Napoleon showed himself as hostile to elective bodies as in the central government. Each of the eighty-three departments of France was to be governed by a *Préfet*, appointed by the central administration, assisted by the advice of a nominated council, which, however, was only allowed to interrupt the *Préfet's* activities during one fortnight of each year. In

this scheme of despotic centralisation Napoleon simply revived, with a new name, the *Intendants* of Richelieu. But there was this great difference : feudalism, which, even when deprived of power, impeded by its privileges the free exercise of the authority of the *Intendant*, had gone. Richelieu's *Intendants* struggled amidst a jungle of dead trees ; Napoleon's *Préfets* moved at ease over the flats of " Equality." This system of local government, like so much else of Napoleon's work, has survived half-a-dozen nineteenth century French Revolutions, and still governs France to-day. It is true that, since 1830, elective bodies have been introduced and their powers extended, but M. Vandal assures us [1] that the ambition for local self-government is scarcely stronger to-day than it was in 1800, and that the Napoleonic *Préfets* still enjoy the spirit, if not the letter, of authority.

The benefits of Napoleonic government were from the first associated with the worst form of tyranny, tyranny over the expression of opinion. All newspapers published in Paris were abolished, with the exception of thirteen, and these were jealously censored. Napoleon realised the power of the press both to hinder and to help him, and from the first he employed the *Moniteur* as an " inspired " government organ. He was the prince of journalists in the best and also in the worst senses of the word. Though he professed to despise eloquence and phrasemakers, he was himself the best phrasemaker of his day. What could be better than " I am the Revolution," or " We have done with the romance of the Revolution ; it is time to begin its history " ? He also knew how to use the press to mislead the public ; to " lie like a *bulletin* " soon became a proverbial simile.

The suppression of the freedom of the press was dictated by fear of the royalists. Napoleon's liberal measures had started a movement of revulsion from Jacobinism that might, if not firmly dealt with, sweep the country into the

[1] *L'Avènement de Bonaparte*, by A. Vandal, vol. ii. p. 254 (Nelson edition).

arms of the Bourbons. There were some who genuinely believed that such was, in fact, Napoleon's aim. Historical parallels were in fashion at that date. The First Consul, it was clear, was not " Washington " ; but was he " Monk " ? The name of this half-forgotten hero of the English restoration passed from mouth to mouth among speculative Frenchmen in the spring of 1800. No ; he was not Monk ; for Monk, after all, was content with the role of Sieyès' " Great Elector," and, after restoring his king, had relapsed into the nonentity of a dukedom. He was not Monk, but Caesar, a Caesar who had won his power at thirty instead of at over fifty, and was to escape the dagger of a Brutus.

One of Napoleon's first acts had been to despatch, for purposes of home consumption, dramatic offers of peace to England and Austria. These being rejected, it remained to force peace upon the enemy by means of victory. North Italy, the scene of Napoleon's former victories, must be recovered. The French " army of Italy," under Masséna, was besieged in Genoa. The " army of the Rhine " was to advance into Germany under Moreau, a great soldier and a simple-minded republican, the one French general whom Napoleon could neither dazzle, frighten, nor corrupt. An " army of the Reserve " was mobilised in the south-east of France under Berthier, Napoleon's indispensable chief of the staff on nearly all his campaigns. When all was ready, the First Consul slipped away from his civilian duties, took command of the army of the Reserve, flung it over the Alps, and fell upon the Austrians from behind, at Marengo. The battle was fought under risky conditions, and was very nearly lost. None the less, it sufficed to convince France that their ruler was indeed the God of War. He had been absent from Paris less than two months ! Civilian opinion, always wrong on military matters even when left to itself, was taught by the *Moniteur* that the First Consul had won the war, and Moreau's more remarkable victory of Hohenlinden, by which, a few months later, the Austrians were induced to

accept defeat and make peace, was allowed to pass comparatively unnoticed. The treaty of Lunéville (1801) repeated, in general terms, the treaty of Campo Formio, and was the prelude to the final dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire.

Great Britain, the most persistent and invulnerable, and therefore the most hated, of all the enemies of France, alone remained, and in 1801 secured the surrender of the garrison left by Napoleon in Egypt. But Great Britain was not prepared to continue fighting for the restoration of stolen European properties, when the owners of those properties themselves had made peace with the robber power. Of the various conquests of our navy, the British government agreed to restore all but Ceylon and Trinidad; and these had not been French, but respectively Dutch and Spanish possessions. It was also understood that we would restore Malta to its previous owners, the Knights of St. John. On this basis, hostilities were terminated in October 1801, and the Treaty of Amiens was signed six months later. Thus the greatest of modern soldiers had established peace throughout Europe within two years of his assumption of power.

Meanwhile a treaty was being prepared with a more venerable power than either Austria or England—with Rome. The Catholic problem was by no means solved by the simple act of liberation which gave Catholics freedom of worship. Many of the Catholic priests refused to take the oath of allegiance to the government which had liberated them; for that government was not in communion with Rome. Moreover, the clergy owed allegiance to their bishops, and these were nearly all *émigré* royalists. Finally there was the schism, created in 1790 by the legislation of the National Assembly, between those who consented and those who did not consent to accept the civil constitution introducing elective arrangements into the Church. All these questions could only be settled with the assistance of the Pope. During

Napoleon's absence in Egypt the Directory had made the preceding Pope, Pius VI., a prisoner, and carried him off to France. The old man had recently died, and one of Napoleon's first acts was to decree him an honourable funeral.

Napoleon believed strongly in religion, not for himself, but for others. Properly treated, religion, he held, was the strongest support of government, the most efficient of political sedatives. He viewed it dispassionately, as a psycho-analyst of society. "It is the nature," he said, "of the peasant to obey the priest, and the priest to obey the bishop; so the bishop must obey the government. The French clergy is at present led by fifty *émigré* bishops in English pay. Their influence must be destroyed, and for this the authority of the Pope is needed." And again: "Religion is not made for philosophers. If I had to make a religion for philosophers, it would be very different from that which I supply for the credulous." And again: "If I ruled a population of Jews, I should rebuild Solomon's Temple."

With these thoughts in his mind, Napoleon despatched an envoy to Rome, whom he told to treat the new Pope, Pius VII., as respectfully as if he had an army of 200,000 men, thus translating spiritual authority into a species of horse-power, that even a revolutionary soldier could understand. Negotiations were obstinately prolonged on points of detail, but the result could not be doubtful, where both parties had so much to gain by coming to terms. At length the Pope consented to renounce, on behalf of the Church, all claims to the land and property secularised by the Revolution. All bishops of both Churches, the Catholic and the "Constitutional" (*i.e.* those who accepted the Civil Constitution of 1790) were to surrender their sees to the Pope, and those who refused to do so were to be deposed. The vacancies, thus created, the Pope was to fill with Napoleon's nominees. Bishops and clergy were to receive salaries from the state treasury. Such was the Concordat

of 1802. In its immediate result, it made the Church a department of the State, but its final result was somewhat different. The Concordat marked an exercise of papal prerogative unequalled since the Middle Ages, and when, later in his reign, Napoleon quarrelled with the Pope, annexed his territories, and made him a prisoner in France, Catholic feeling secretly hardened against the Emperor. It was not so easy, after all, to harness the Church to the chariot of Caesar.

Still, these events were as yet many years distant, and the Concordat was, at the time of its making, the most signal example of Napoleon's gift for healing old wounds and carrying out the wishes of the French people. The Tribunate raised a noisy protest, and once more proved that, wherever France might be represented, she was not represented by the political debating society devised and selected for her by Sieyès.

The years which saw the treaties of Lunéville and Amiens and the Concordat, also saw the composition of the Civil Code, better known as the Code Napoléon, whereby the First Consul challenged comparison, not with Caesar, but with Justinian. Those who, abhorring Napoleon's crimes, desire to whittle away his achievements, have often maintained that Napoleon did not compose the Code, but simply, by affixing his signature, stole the credit that belonged to his legal advisers.[1] This is a very shallow and prejudiced view. Of course Napoleon was not the author of the Code in the sense in which a poet is the author of his odes and elegies. None the less, it was he who decreed that the Code should be composed ; he who laid down the main principles guiding its composition ; he who supplied that driving power that forced the enormous task through to its accomplishment. The spade work was done in his great political laboratory, the Council of State, but he himself presided at more than half the hundred sittings of the committee of final revision,

[1] Of these the most important was Cambacérès, the Second Consul.

amazing its members by the extent of his knowledge, the shrewdness of his criticisms, and his insatiable appetite for hard work.

The Code illustrates as clearly as the *Préfet* system and the Concordat Napoleon's relationship to the past history of France. The wild idealism of the Revolution had sought to make a wholly new beginning, to cut France off from a past dead and rotten. Napoleon discerned all that there was in that past which was essential to the life of the people whose traditions it had fashioned, and, while accepting and establishing the great principle of 1789, the substitution of Equality for Feudalism, he combined with it the work of the statesmen and legislators of the old monarchy. The Code is a subtle compromise between the legislation of the Revolutionary Assemblies and the legislation of the greater ministers of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., notably of Louis XV.'s great chancellor, D'Aguesseau. Perhaps the best illustration of this compromise is furnished by the law of bequest. Before the Revolution, a father's control over the disposition of his personal property was absolute, and feudal estates were entailed from eldest son to eldest son. The Revolution, in the interests of equality, had destroyed testamentary liberty, and compelled the father to divide his estate between his sons in equal shares. The Code, while reserving a considerable part of an estate for equal division, reserved the remainder to the father for his free disposal. Napoleon's personal contributions to the Code were numerous and important, and there is about many of them a curious flavour of ancient Rome. He exalts the authority of the father as a sort of miniature " First Consul " of the family circle, and he ruthlessly sweeps away any Revolutionary legislation that made for the equality of the sexes. Religion, child-bearing, and needlework seemed to him to mark the proper limits of feminine activity. Needless to say, the Code is disfigured by evidences of tyranny. Among crimes punishable by deportation for life are those due to

" false political ideas, the spirit of party, and mistaken ambition."

The Code was published and made law in 1804, and has remained the basis of French civil law ever since. At that date no European country, except England, had a single system of law applicable to all classes of subjects, for all other countries were still afflicted with the remains of feudal institutions, and the first principle of feudalism is legal inequality, or privilege. French conquest spread the Code far beyond the frontiers of France, and when the French governments were driven out, ten years later, the French Code in most cases remained. It provides to-day the basis of law in Belgium and Holland, Italy, Spain, and in the republics of South and Central America.

Napoleon was not content to attack freedom of thought merely by the negative methods of punishment. He resolved to strike at its roots by creating a system of national education. " My principal object in founding a teaching body," he said, " is to have a means of directing political and moral opinion." At the head of the system stood the new University of France, and beneath it and around it, *lycées*, secondary schools, run on military lines, inspected by soldiers, and controlled, down to the last detail of their time-tables, by the authorities in Paris. The system was, in fact, modelled on that of the Jesuits ; it was designed to produce the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of mental independence. It can be illustrated at its worst in the regulations regarding the elementary schools for the populace in general. " Inspectors," says the decree of 1811, " will see to it that masters of primary schools do not carry their instruction beyond reading and arithmetic." Only one other subject, beyond the " three Rs," was admitted to the curriculum, namely recitation of the Imperial Catechism. " We owe in particular to Napoleon I., our Emperor, love, respect, obedience, fidelity, military service, and the taxes ordered for the preservation and defence of his throne . . .

for it is he whom God has raised up to restore the public worship and holy religion of our fathers, and to be their protector." Before condemning Napoleon whole-heartedly for his educational system, one should remember that in England at this date, the state, controlled by a parliament of landowners, provided no national system of education for the poor at all, and that a bill introduced with that object in 1807 was easily defeated by the strenuous opposition of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Like many great autocrats, Napoleon had a passion for the expression of his magnificence in architecture. He began the rebuilding of Paris which was completed by his nephew, the second Emperor. To Napoleon Paris owes the magnificent extension of the Louvre, and its use as a national picture gallery and museum.

As the years passed on, and *Brumaire* became a distant memory, the pomps and vanities of court life were gathered around the republican magistrate ; the Tuileries, his official residence, began to imitate the wearisome splendours of Versailles, and the establishment of the Empire could be foreseen. Whatever the demerits of the step, it was no betrayal of the principles of 1789. Republicanism had been no part of the original programme of the Revolution, and Empire, with the hereditary principle, seemed to give the only real security for the maintenance of the " constitution " which France had at last won, against the twin perils of anarchy and the restoration of feudalism. In 1803 an elaborate plot was set on foot for the assassination of Napoleon. Its leading spirit was the old " Chouan " (western rebel) leader, Georges Cadoudal, and various members of the British government were in his confidence, a fact hardly excusable, even though the war between the two countries had begun again. The plotters were outwitted from the first by Fouché's agents, for Fouché, though he had recently been dismissed from his old post because he knew too much, remained in the detective business in a private

capacity, and took this opportunity of proving, like a Sherlock Holmes of real life, the comparative stupidity of the official force. The plot was allowed to ripen, and then all the leaders were arrested ; Cadoudal was executed ; Pichegru, a general who had turned royalist at the time of *Fructidor*, strangled himself in prison ; Moreau, who knew of the plot and, though refusing to join it, did not betray it, was banished from France ; and the Duc d'Enghien, a member of the Bourbon family resident in Germany, who had nothing to do with the matter at all, was seized and taken to Paris and shot, in order to illustrate, before an astonished and disapproving world, the ancient Corsican custom of the vendetta.

The foiling of the royalist plot seemed a suitable occasion for inaugurating the new Empire. Though Napoleon was Caesar, he might also add the rôle of Charlemagne, and the Imperial coronation of 1804 might find a precedent in the Imperial coronation of 800. Napoleon, however, improved on his predecessor in two respects. He did not go to Rome, but summoned the Pope from Rome to Paris ; and, though summoned so far, the Pope's part in the ceremony was carefully limited. He anointed the future emperor and empress ; he also blessed their crowns ; but when he thought to place the crown on Napoleon's head, he was gently waved aside. Napoleon crowned himself, and then crowned his wife, thereby indicating that he was a self-made emperor.

Meanwhile the English war had begun again, and Austrian, Russian and Prussian wars were to follow. As one watches the splendid dawn of the Consulate fade into the stuffy pomps and arrogancies, the senseless and suicidal ambitions of the Empire, one is struck by an unpleasant resemblance, a reminiscence of the past. Napoleon has shrunk from a new Caesar into a new Louis XIV.

(iv) NAPOLEON BEYOND EUROPE

Among the famous remarks of Napoleon few are better known than his saying, " This old Europe wearies me." Though fate limited his conquests to Europe, there are good reasons for supposing that he would have preferred to make an empire in Africa, in Asia, in America, and even in Australia. Perhaps he realised that conquests in Europe, beyond the limits already achieved before he took over the government of France, lacked the probability of permanence. Perhaps he felt that the glamour of conquest is in proportion to its distance from its base. Alexander remains, after all, a more romantic figure than Caesar. Before his Egyptian campaign he said, " I must seek glory in the East ; all great fame comes from that quarter." No doubt also there was in him, as in Caesar, who dreamed of seeking with Cleopatra the sources of the Nile, a strong element of the explorer's instinct. He was certainly not speaking in irony, though the words, coming from him, have an ironic suggestion, when he said, " The true conquests, the only conquests which cost no regrets, are those achieved over ignorance." But Napoleon was, among other worse things, a statesman, and no doubt his strongest motive was a desire to secure for France an empire such as had fallen to the lot of England. Only forty years before the Consulate, the Seven Years War had decided the rivalry of England and France in both India and America in favour of England. Could not that verdict be reversed ? For this purpose he realised that the first requisite was a navy that could beat the British fleet. As early as 1797 he said, " Let us concentrate all our activity on our navy, and destroy England." Yet in this sphere alone Napoleon does not seem to have carried his conclusions into action. He never concentrated his attention upon naval problems, and seems to have persuaded himself that he could create an invincible fleet by the simple process of bullying his admirals.

Yet if he supposed that naval power alone could settle the problem, he was wrong. England owed her success in Empire far more to her prowess in peace than her prowess in war. North America became British and not French, because there were a million-and-a-half British colonists in the country and only sixty thousand French. India became British and not French, because the British East India Company was an immensely prosperous concern, paying toll to the government, whereas the French East India Company had been a languishing failure, subsidised with tax-payers' money.

The Egyptian expedition was the only one of Napoleon's projects beyond Europe that got very far beyond the stage of a castle in the air ; and even this became a castle in the air in a different sense, as soon as Nelson had destroyed the French fleet in Aboukir Bay. When Napoleon came back in the autumn of 1799, he had to leave his army behind him, and, even so, he was lucky to reach the French coast without being captured. The Egyptian expedition was intended to menace England's trade with India. A Suez Canal was to be cut, and made a French monopoly, and the possession of the shortened route would, it was hoped, gradually transfer the Indian trade from British to French hands. It was an ingenious scheme ; even in St. Helena Napoleon declared that Egypt was the most important country in the world. Once in Egypt, he gave his imagination free play ; he would march " either on Constantinople or on Delhi." If he chose the latter course, he would rouse the Christians of the East, overthrow the Turks, and " take Europe in the rear." As it was, the Egyptian expedition produced no conquests but what Napoleon had called " true conquests," for the scientists he took with him laid the foundations of modern Egyptology.

Napoleon turned his attention to India again after the treaty of Amiens, and General Decaen was despatched to that country to " communicate with the princes and peoples

who are most impatient under the yoke of the English Company," and to send home a report. But Decaen's expedition did not arrive until the war had begun again, and it was never allowed to land.

During the French Revolution, Hayti, the second-largest of West Indian Islands, and one of the chief colonies of France, had rebelled, and established its independence under the gifted negro, Toussaint L'Ouverture. Napoleon devoted a great expenditure of men and money, during the Consulate, to the recovery of this island. Toussaint was seized and brought to France, where he died in prison. But the fevers of the island and, when the war began again, the British fleet, rendered all Napoleon's efforts vain.

But before this he had cast his eyes on a far more valuable prize. The old French colony of Louisiana, with its control of the mouth of the Mississippi, and its claims to the whole of its vast plains, had been surrendered by Louis XV. to Spain in 1762. In 1800 Napoleon made a secret treaty with Spain, whereby that country agreed to return it to France in exchange for a paltry province in Italy. Jefferson, the friend of France, was about to become President of the United States ; Washington was dead, and Hamilton out of politics. The simple-minded Americans might, perhaps, be bamboozled into allowing the French to make a start, and once the start had been made, during the interval conveniently provided by the treaty of Amiens, which locked up the British fleet far more effectively than Napoleon's admirals were ever likely to lock it up, much might be done. But, alas, President Jefferson, stiffened by American patriotism behind him, was no longer the Jefferson of 1793. Napoleon saw that the scheme was hopeless, and sold Louisiana to the Americans for sixty million francs. Needless to say, Spain did not get her Italian province.

One more continent remains. Among the large assortment of books which Napoleon took with him to Egypt was *The Voyages of Captain Cook*. Australia at that date was so

little explored that opinion was still divided as to whether it consisted of one vast island or of two. The only European settlement was the British penal colony, near what is now Sydney. In 1800 Napoleon planned a great French expedition to "New Holland," as it was called, with purposes nominally purely geographical, and twenty-three scientific men on board. The expedition was allowed to pass by the British naval authorities on the strength of its purely pacific character. For more than a year it sailed about in Australian waters, causing a certain flutter among English officials, which resulted in the annexation of Tasmania. The only product of its labours was a map, afterwards published by Napoleon, in which the continent bears the name of "Terre Napoléon Nouvelle."

Such is the curious, half-forgotten, and somewhat ridiculous record of "Napoleon beyond Europe." It has interest as showing where his ambitions lay. It also prepares one for the incredible errors that disfigured the last two-thirds of his reign, and caused an amount of misery surpassing that inflicted hitherto by any single human being upon mankind. For in these projects, as in his later European projects, Napoleon exhibits an extraordinary capacity for refusing to envisage the limits of the possible and to keep within them. Between a conquest of the Mississippi valley, which it was impossible even to begin, and an undertaking foredoomed to fail, like the Russian campaign of 1812, there is a difference only of degree.

(v) MEGALOMANIA (1803-1815)

Many causes have been suggested for the rupture of the peace of the Consulate and for the vast cycle of wars that stretch from 1803 to 1814. Indeed, the activities of Napoleon have produced as great a diversity of explanations as have the inactivities of Hamlet, the one being presumably the most discussed character of history, as the other of fiction. Mr.

Fisher provides a half humorous list in his brilliant lectures on "Bonapartism." We may regard Napoleon as no more than an exceptionally aggressive ruler of the most militant and aggressive of European peoples, a new and greater Louis XIV., extending the French frontier, not to the Rhine but to the Vistula; or we may regard him as the Corsican adventurer, who, having won a throne for himself, is inspired by the "instinct of the clan," to find thrones for all his brothers and sisters also; or again, we may regard him as a romantic imitator of the great conquerors of old, seeking to enact by turns the rôles of Alexander, Caesar, and Charlemagne; or again, we may regard him as one who conquered Europe simply and solely to exclude England from its trade, one who determined to reverse the performance of the elder Pitt, and re-conquer America in Germany; or again, we may regard him as the half-unconscious missionary of the gospel of the French Revolution, "preaching, through the cannon's throat, that great doctrine, *La carrière ouverte aux talents* (the tools to him that can handle them);"[1] or again, we may regard him as the man with a passion for order and good government, determined to rule the world in order to show how it ought to be ruled; or, lastly, we may regard him as the supreme cynic, who has discovered that the way to get most sport out of his fellow-creatures is to form a certain number of them into a pack and use it for hunting the rest. "Ah! la guerre! belle occupation!" as he exclaimed in St. Helena.

All these explanations have in them an element of truth. None the less, the record of these wars constitutes, for all but the student of methods of warfare, a somewhat unprofitable study. The present writer would, if he had the courage, adopt at this point in the story the device of an older historian and confine himself to a statement that the rest of the acts of Napoleon and all that he did, are they not written in a variety of chronicles easily accessible to the reader? As this might

[1] Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, book ii. chap. viii.

be resented, he appends a brief statement of the facts. He makes no apology for its brevity, since the subject in hand is now not statesmanship but megalomania.

In 1803 Napoleon declared Piedmont, the country between France and the Cisalpine Republic, annexed to France. England, therefore, refused to surrender Malta to its "Knights of St. John," knowing that this would mean its immediate transfer to France. So the war began again between France and England, and French armies overran Hanover, then the property of the British sovereign. The main use of Hanover during the next two years was as a bait to be dangled before the nose of the Prussian government, in order to secure the neutrality of that power. Throughout 1804 and the first half of 1805 Napoleon was preparing at Boulogne his invasion of England, but the details of the scheme were so foolish and fantastic that some historians doubt whether more than a gigantic bluff was ever intended. In any case, as soon as Sir Robert Calder had prevented the French fleet from sailing up the Channel, according to plan, Napoleon turned his back on England for ever, and marched against Austria. He had already won the first brilliant victory of his Austrian campaign, at Ulm, on the Danube, one day before Nelson destroyed the Franco-Spanish fleet at Trafalgar.

Then followed those great campaigns which raised Napoleon's power to absurd and perilous heights. The Austrians and Russians were defeated at Austerlitz (December 1805), the Prussians at Jena and Aüerstadt (October 1806), and the Russians again at Friedland on the Vistula (June 1807). This last victory led up to the treaty of Tilsit. The scheme of this famous treaty was a new Europe, an application on the grand scale, to that unfortunate continent, of the principles of the partition of Poland. Henceforth there were to be Two Allied Empires, an Eastern and a Western, according to the best Roman specifications—Napoleon in Paris and Alexander in St. Petersburg. Prussia

and Austria were no longer to be taken account of as Great Powers. Prussia was now a province of France in everything but name, and was compelled to accept the commercial code which was to be the weapon of the Two Empires against England. Austria had only one seaport, Trieste, and that was taken away from her two years later. As for the outlying remnants, Scandinavia, Turkey, Spain, Portugal and Denmark, they would be snapped up by one or other of the Imperial allies, as soon as was found convenient, and the sooner the better. Both Empires were to exclude all British ships and goods from their ports. This was Napoleon's famous Continental System, devised to bring England to her knees at last. Where naval and military assaults had failed, commercial strangulation should succeed. Napoleon boasted that he would "make commerce manœuvre like a regiment." Instead, he made it manœuvre like a smuggler. Europe suffered far more than England by the blockade, and French rule, once associated with the benefits of the Code Napoléon, now came to be associated with a deprivation of half the common comforts of life.

It now remained to snap up "the remnants," for so long as a sprinkling of European ports remained outside the Continental System, that system could not even be expected to achieve the great task of bringing Great Britain to her knees. The first on the list was Denmark, but here Britain anticipated Napoleon's action by forcing the Danes to hand over their fleet for the duration of the war. Then came the turn of Portugal, which Napoleon proposed to partition with his infinitely gullible ally, the Spanish government. A French army marched into Portugal, and here again the fleet escaped and sailed away to Brazil, with the Portuguese royal family on board. Then the Spanish king was tricked, dethroned, and imprisoned, and Joseph Bonaparte, formerly King of Naples, was appointed King of Spain. But now the unexpected happened. The Spaniards were a very

backward and barbarous, but also an intensely proud and self-conscious, nation. They refused to accept Napoleonic conquest as an accomplished fact, and all over that mountainous and unmanageable country rose an irrepressible rebellion. And at last the British government found a use for the British army so effective, that it has enabled us to forget the long series of military misadventures that had marked our conduct of war on land hitherto. The Peninsular War had begun. Its length was uncertain, but, granted persistence and the retention of Wellington in command, its final success was inevitable. In 1809 Napoleon had another war with Austria, culminating in the hard-fought victory of Wagram; but in 1810 and 1811 he had no war but the Anglo-Spanish war on hand, and he might have taken control in person of his Peninsular campaigns. But he preferred to leave it to his marshals, whose mutual jealousies helped the cause of his enemies.

Napoleon's empire had, by 1810, reached its greatest extent. It included all that is now France, Belgium and Holland,[1] the German territories of the left bank of the Rhine, and a strip of north Germany including most of Hanover and running up to Lubeck on the Baltic; it also included north-eastern Italy. As for the rest of Italy, there was a "Kingdom of Italy" including Lombardy and Venice, of which Napoleon was king; a kingdom of Naples, ruled by his brother-in-law, Murat, the great cavalry leader; an Arch-Duchy of Tuscany, for his sister Eliza; and Departments of Tiber and Trasimene, where had once been the papal states. Trieste and Dalmatia had been taken from Austria after the war of 1809, so that here Napoleon's empire touched the then frontiers of Turkey. All Germany between the Rhine and the Elbe, with some areas east of the latter river, formed the Confederation of the Rhine, being ruled by German princes under Napoleon's patronage and

[1] Holland was for a few years the "kingdom" of Louis Bonaparte, father of Napoleon III., the ruler of the "Second Empire."

control. Amongst these German princes was inserted Napoleon's brother, Jerome, as King of Westphalia. The only brother not rewarded with a kingdom was Lucien, the ablest and most independent of them. Prussia was virtually a dependent state, having been compelled to reduce her army to 40,000 men and to dismiss her ablest minister, Stein, at Napoleon's bidding. Beyond Prussia, Poland had been brought back to life, as a client state, with the title of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Of the great independent powers, Russia was still the ally of Tilsit, and Austria had admitted her acceptance of the new scheme of things by supplying Napoleon with a wife, Marie Louise, the sister of the last Holy Roman Emperor, and the niece of Marie Antoinette.

It would be difficult, in fact impossible, to estimate whether Napoleonic conquest inflicted more benefits or more hardships upon its victims. The system of government in all cases was, of course, a grinding tyranny organised by foreign officials, backed by foreign soldiers, with high taxation, restriction of trade, and, in many cases, conscription of men to fight in wars in which they could not be expected to feel any interest. The German provinces, lying across the highways of great campaigns, suffered far more severely than the Italian provinces. But there is much to be set on the other side. It might well be claimed that the wounds dealt by Napoleon were surgical, and that, after recovery, the patient was far healthier than before. Feudalism was abolished, toleration and industrial freedom took the place of monopolies in church and trade. Then came the Code, sweeping away barbarous punishments and ancient perversions of justice. Henceforth justice was only perverted when the interests of the government actually required it to be so, as in the case of Palm, the German bookseller, who was executed for selling a pamphlet entitled "The Humiliation of Germany." Such cases were wicked, but exceptional. In the mass, Germans and Italians learnt what

it meant to have state accounts properly kept, and laws properly drafted. Hundreds of intelligent Germans and Italians found employment in the new administrations, and learnt therein a new standard of efficiency ; the career was, in fact, open to the talents and not to the privileged. Seeing that Napoleonic conquest was bound to prove a brief experience, it was perhaps an experience worth having. A great Irishman has maintained that England's greatest misfortune was her failure to get conquered by Napoleon. Neither we nor the Irish are, perhaps, sufficiently detached to judge on that point ; but it can hardly be doubted that a Napoleonic conquest of Spain might have been the salvation of that country. The English fought the Peninsular War in their own interests ; but it may well be that our victories were, in the long run, Spanish disasters.

No sooner had Napoleon's empire reached its greatest extent than it began to fall to pieces. In the summer of 1810 the Czar renounced the Continental System and threw open his ports to British shipping. Both sides slowly prepared for war, and in 1812 Napoleon launched upon Russia the largest army yet seen in civilised warfare. The attempt to lead an army of 600,000 men, imperfectly provisioned from its base, through a country as roadless and as thinly populated as Russia, was doomed to fail, and the army began to melt away as soon as it began to advance. The Russian winter only did for Napoleon's army what the storm did for the Spanish Armada ; it turned what was already a decisive defeat into an unspeakable horror.

In the next year, 1813, the German people discovered at last the consciousness of their nationality, and rose against the French, dragging the Prussian government along with them. Austria, after much careful balancing and bargaining, came in on the side of the allies, and Napoleon was decisively defeated at Leipzig. A brief campaign in the early spring of 1814 finished the war at Paris. Again and again during these last months Napoleon could have had peace on ridiculously

favourable terms. After the battle of Leipzig the allies offered to let him retain Belgium and all territory west of the Rhine ; but he was mad, and refused. Such offers were no longer to be had when the allies had entered Paris. Talleyrand convinced the Czar that the Bourbons must be recalled, and Napoleon was presented with a pension and the island of Elba. France heaved a sigh of relief at his departure as deep as that which she had heaved in welcome of his First Consular measures fourteen years before. On his way to Elba, at Orange, in the south of France, he narrowly escaped being savagely handled by a French crowd.

Great Britain had been his lifelong enemy, and the chief instrument in bringing him to ruin at last, and at this moment of his career he discovered for himself a curious consolation. " I have left," he said, " in her flanks a poisoned dart. It is I who have made her National Debt, that will ever burden, if not crush, future generations." How bitter it would have been for him, if he could have realised that, fifty years later, we were refraining from paying off the debt, not because we could not have done so, but because the burden had become so light that we had ceased to notice it !

When, owing to the carelessness of his English custodians, Napoleon returned to France, almost exactly a year after he had left it, he received an amazing welcome from the army ; but the people of France were cold and apprehensive. The Napoleonic romance, which helped his nephew to the throne thirty-five years later, had not yet been invented. What confronted the French people in 1815 was the Napoleonic history, and of this they did not desire any further instalments. Happily the chapter as yet to be written was a brief one, a Hundred Days—Waterloo and then St. Helena.

There are many great figures in history whose characters and statesmanship remain subjects of dispute ; but the causes of such disputations are very various. Sometimes

the cause is defective evidence. Evidence as to the character and statesmanship of most of the great figures of ancient history is genuinely defective. There are gaps, and the imagination of the historical artist must perforce take wings, where the industry of the historical researcher is unable to cut steps. There is, for example, reasonable doubt as to the part played by Pericles in the events leading up to the Peloponnesian War. The historian's duty is to indicate honestly the point at which convincing evidence fails him, but, having done so, he is right in refusing to relapse into mere agnosticism. He must complete his picture in accordance with what he regards as the probabilities of the case ; and this is a task in which one man will take one line and another another, and neither can prove the other wrong. A second cause of uncertainty and dispute is the existence of what may be called historical " double-stars." It is not possible, for example, to decide precisely how much or how little Washington owed to Hamilton, or, to take an example from outside this book, how much Elizabeth owed to Lord Burghley. Yet a third cause is a duality and confusion in the character of the historical personage himself. In Napoleon III., for example, the elements of idealist and conspirator were so strangely and inconsistently blended that we may well have to wait till the Day of Judgment before his character is satisfactorily elucidated. But, in a fourth case, the cause of dispute lies not in the nature of the evidence but in the natures of those who interpret it. Unless a day should come when religion is as dead as astrology, it will always remain impossible to present the careers of the great religious leaders in such a way as to satisfy and convince every class of reader at once. For what is in dispute in such a case is not so much Luther, or Loyola, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Newman, as the religious values they represented.

The disputes that have raged round Napoleon belong to this last class. The evidence as to the kind of man and the

Charles I.'s Duke of Buckingham), the Swedes, and, above all, the French. The war lasted thirty years ; half Germany was laid waste, and Alsace passed to France.

Without much exaggeration it may be said that these are typical samples of pre-Bismarckian German history. Every European country in the Middle Ages was the scene of a perennial struggle between king and barons, monarchy and feudalism, central government and local government. In England, and, with more difficulty, in France, the central government won ; in Germany it was beaten. Many reasons have been suggested to explain this contrast. The school of historians that has been hypnotised by the enduring significance of Rome stresses the fact that Germany, unlike France and England, was not subjected to the wholesome discipline of the conquering legions, and the Roman law that followed in their wake. Just as we are told (wrongly) that one who has not been educated at an English Public School bears the traces of this misfortune to the day of his death, so it might be thought that the German failure in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was due to a defective political education more than a thousand years before. Vercingetorix got himself beaten by Caesar and saved France. Arminius defeated the legions of Varus and ruined the prospects of Germany. This theory may not be quite so fantastic as it sounds.

More plausibly it is argued that Germany had not too little association with Rome but too much. This second line of argument traces the misfortunes of German kingship and German unity to the fatal ambition and antiquarianism of the German king, Otto the Great, who, a hundred years before the Norman conquest, claimed for himself, and burdened his successors with, the title of Roman Emperor. Charlemagne had worn with ease the Roman imperial crown because, allowing for the changed circumstances of his day, he had earned it. Otto and his successors were never more than imperial pretenders, uneasily bestraddling the Alps,

and finding it impossible to plant one foot firmly in Italy without taking the other off the soil of Germany.

But perhaps geographical influence counted for most in conditioning the development of Germany. Three geographical factors influence the prospects of any central government: the size of the country, the character of its frontiers, and the character of its internal communications. In England the area is small, the frontier ideal, namely, the sea in all directions except the fifty miles of Scottish border,[1] and internal communications easy owing to the absence of mountains and large rivers. Consequently the English kings, from William the Conqueror onwards, enjoyed an authority in England that cannot be matched on the continent till several centuries later. France is larger, and its frontiers, though good, except on the north-east, are less good, but its internal communications are excellent, and the French kings achieved authority when once they had driven out the English and patched up their north-east frontier. The Spanish peninsula is as large as France and its frontiers are admirable, but its internal communications are very difficult. Consequently the peninsula housed, until the end of the middle ages, a half-dozen, more or less, of petty kingdoms, and when centralisation was achieved, its imposition was accompanied by paralysing rigours. Germany (including Bohemia and Austria) is larger than France; it has little sea frontier; its land frontiers are bad on the east and west, and their excellence on the south was wasted when antiquarianism defied geography and sent emperor after emperor to Rome; its internal communications are mainly good, but impose serious barriers in the way of a central government that chooses to establish itself in Vienna, as accident of dynasty led most of the German kings after 1273 to do.

If we would understand a nation we must enter into its national memories. The amazing achievement of Bismarck filled the German people with sentiments which made them

[1] Omitting, for simplicity's sake, the minor problem of Wales.

intolerable to all their neighbours. In order to see Bismarck's achievement with their eyes, we must get an idea, however vague and brief, of the humiliations of six preceding centuries.

It is one of the ironies of German history that the greatest political genius that ever wore the German crown did nothing, or worse than nothing, for the country. Frederick II. (1212-1250) preferred his Italian to his German dominions, and all the latter part of his reign was filled with the final struggle of mediaeval Papacy and Empire. He rarely visited Germany, and sought to relieve himself of his responsibilities towards it by welding the greater fiefs into a federation of feudal vice-royalties. After his death came anarchy and "the Great Interregnum" for twenty-three years, followed by the election of the first Hapsburg emperor. The complete feudalisation of Germany was officially recognised by the so-called Golden Bull of the Emperor Charles IV. in 1356. This Golden Bull laid down the law of imperial elections, seven leading German princes being privileged to elect, and henceforth styled Electors. These were three archbishops, Mayence, Cologne, and Trèves, and four lay princes, Bohemia, Saxony, Brandenburg, and the Count Palatine. As a rule the Electors consented to confirm by their votes the hereditary principle, at the price of a continual enlargement of their own privileges. Thus the Hapsburg family retained the title without a break from 1438 onwards. Of the author of this Golden Bull it has been said that "he legalised anarchy and called it a constitution." [1]

The Hapsburg family brought the art of royal marriage or heiress-capture to a singular perfection, and the Emperor Charles V. (1519-1558) was, by inheritance, not only archduke of Austria, but also King of Bohemia, King of Hungary, King of Spain, and holder of a variety of titles which gave him Belgium and Holland and the old County of Burgundy. But even so he no more succeeded in being a king of Germany

[1] Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*.

than he succeeded in being a Roman Emperor. He was, in fact, no more a German than our own George I. was an Englishman, and he spent but a small part of his reign in the country, propounding a series of spasmodic and mutually contradictory solutions of the Lutheran question. It may be said that Friar Martin defeated the Emperor, and that the German princes defeated Friar Martin. The Emperor could no more check the tide of Lutheran revolt than Canute could check the tide of salt water; but the princes succeeded in canalising, for their own purposes, the inundations of religious enthusiasm. Luther believed that in rejecting the God of Rome, he had re-discovered the God of St. Paul; the German princes did with the new religion, in their own small way, what Napoleon tried, less successfully, to do with the revised Catholicism of France. Each prince who "Lutheranised" his territory, made himself the head of the religious organisation, and acquired his modicum of Divine Right. The princes paid lip-service to the new doctrine, and the new church paid life-service to the princes, and "our good old German god," as Bismarck's war minister, Roon, once called him, began his reign in the hearts of German protestants. The principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, "the ruler decides the religion," was legalised in 1555, after the decisive failure of Charles V.'s attempt to impose a national compromise between the two creeds, *à l'Anglaise*, on Catholic and Protestant alike. The religious disunion of Germany was a result, not a cause, of the political disunion that preceded and accompanied it.

The Thirty Years War (1618-1648) merely repeated and emphasised the failure recorded in the previous century, and brought the French and the Swedes into occupation of German territory. In the eighteenth century the struggle took a different form, for the strife of creeds was over, and one of the North German Electorates had, by a long course of dexterous management, secured for itself an unprecedented position.

The history of Brandenburg can be traced back to the day, some thirty years after the death of our King Alfred, when Henry the Fowler, King of Germany and father of Otto the Great, stormed "Brannibor," the fortress of the heathen Wends, and made it a fortress of his own, setting over it a border baron or Margrave. Thus the centrepiece of the future kingdom of Prussia begins its history in the tenth century as an outpost of Christianity and civilisation to the north-east, just as, about the same time, Austria (the Ost, or East, Mark) guarded civilisation on the Danube. Three hundred years later (early thirteenth century), the Order of Teutonic Knights, transferred from the Holy Land, pushed out farther along the Baltic, and established German rule and the Christian Church among the barbarous Borussi, or Prussians, founding the fortress of Königsberg.

The connection of Brandenburg with the Hohenzollern family began when, in 1415, a member of that family, Frederick of Nuremberg, bought the electorate from the Emperor Sigismund, thus founding the long line of hard fighters and shrewd bargainers whose statues adorn the *Sieges Allee* [1] in Berlin, and whose exploits fill the early pages of Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*. At the time of the Lutheran movement, one Albert of Hohenzollern, a relative of these Electors of Brandenburg, being Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, converted himself to Lutheranism and the territories of the Order into an hereditary duchy of Prussia for the benefit of his family. This was in 1526; nearly a hundred years later his line became extinct, and the eastern part of the duchy passed to his kinsman, the Elector of Brandenburg, the western being secured by Poland. At about the same time, early in the seventeenth century, the Elector also acquired the three little duchies of Cleves, Mark and Ravensburg, separate from each other and sprinkled between Hanover and the Dutch frontier.

Thus, when the storms of the Thirty Years War broke

[1] Avenue of Victory.

upon Germany, the territories of the Elector stretched, in five separate pieces, over a distance of some seven hundred miles, from the Rhine to the Niemen. The Hohenzollern of the day cannot be said to have risen to the height of his somewhat arduous opportunities. He was, in fact, the weakest of the line, by name George William. Carlyle christens him " poor *Que faire?* " and tells how " while Titans were bowling rocks at one another, he sought, by dexterous skipping, to escape his share of the game." His successor, Frederick William, the Great Elector, was a man of very different stamp, being in fact the first of the three great statesmen of Prussia.[1] This Frederick William was perhaps the first of rulers to cultivate simultaneously a strong army and a pacific foreign policy. During the last years of the Thirty Years War he raised an army to enforce his own neutrality, and to secure a share of the pickings from exhausted belligerents when peace came at last. In all this he was successful. Later he fought a little for Sweden against Poland and for Poland against Sweden, changing sides with an agility that has won moral approbation of no one outside Germany except Carlyle, who writes : " An inconsistent, treacherous man ? Perhaps not, O reader ! perhaps a man advancing in circuits, the only way he has ; spirally, face now to east, now to west, with his own reasonable private aim sun-clear to himself all the while." This private aim was the acquisition of western Prussia, which would link together the two main fragments of his territory. It was not attained within Frederick William's lifetime. None the less, a well-managed state with a strong army, and territorial interests in the north and west, was bound to win the spoils of a successful championship of German interests, when once the dominance of France and Sweden

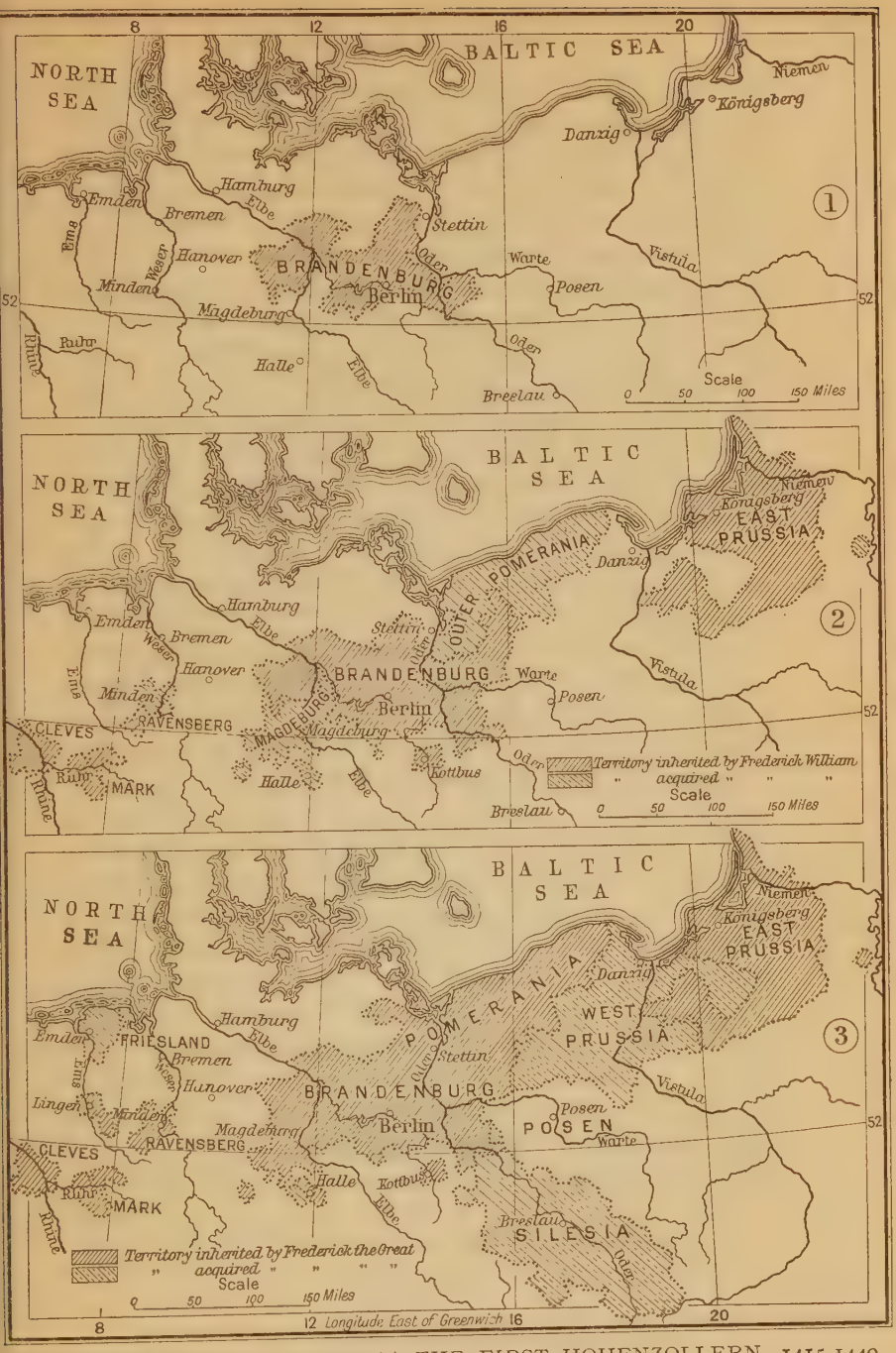
[1] It may aid the memory to notice that the dates of the Great Elector are 1640-1688, the dates of Frederick the Great 1740-1786, and the dates of the two Kings of Prussia with whom Bismarck was chiefly concerned, 1840-1888 (Frederick William IV. 1840-1861, William I. 1861-1888).

was overthrown, as it was in the first twenty years of the eighteenth century. In his long spells of peace-time the Great Elector was a vigorous breaker-down of feudal privileges and local organs of self-government, a shrewd cultivator of the land, and a strong believer in religious toleration. Skilled Dutchmen were imported to plough up the sandy flats of North Germany, and to teach the natives the arts of agriculture ; Huguenots expelled from France, Jews expelled from anywhere, found a ready welcome, provided they made themselves useful. Frederick William was, in fact, the true founder of the Prussian state.

It was the boast of the Hohenzollerns that each of them, from the Great Elector to the first Emperor, made an addition to Prussian territory. Frederick I. (1688-1713) secured the title of King in return for his services to the Emperor in the War of the Spanish Succession, impropriety being avoided by changing the style from Elector of Brandenburg to King of Prussia. There could, it was considered, be no king of Brandenburg, since Brandenburg was part of the kingdom of Germany nominally ruled by the Hapsburg Emperor from Vienna ; but Prussia was technically outside the traditional German frontiers, and its ruler might therefore call himself a king without infringing the rights of the king of Germany. Thus the obscure and non-German Borussians gave their name to the greatest of German kingdoms.

The second king, Frederick William I. (1713-1740) carried Prussian characteristics to uncouth extremes. He loved his army far too well to use it, collected tall guardsmen from all over Europe, disciplined his civil service with a cane, and kept no court but his smoking-room. On the break-up of the Swedish Empire he secured the valuable port of Stettin.

His successor, Frederick the Great (1740-1786), was Machiavelli's " prince " incarnate, with certain foibles superadded, such as atheism, flute-playing, and composition of verses in French. When, in the first year of his reign, he



1-2 BRANDENBURG UNDER (1) THE FIRST HOHENZOLLERN, 1415-1440
(2) THE GREAT ELECTOR, 1640-1688

3 PRUSSIA, UNDER FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1740-1786

marched his father's admirable army into the Austrian province of Silesia, he not only secured for Prussia a valuable extension of territory, and set going the great German civil war of the eighteenth century (1740-1763, with an interval in the middle); he also established a new tradition of diplomatic bad manners. Hitherto it had been part of the polite hypocrisy of princes to pretend that what they coveted, and intended to steal, really belonged to them already. When, for example, Louis XIV. proposed to conquer from Spain what is now Belgium, his legal advisers discovered, or invented, a so-called Law of Devolution, whereby this territory was, by hereditary right, his already. The fiction deceived no single human being, but was intended presumably to hoodwink the Almighty. Frederick had the advantage of not believing in a hoodwinkable Almighty, and he frankly admitted that he acted upon the principles by which Machiavelli had said long before that princes should govern their foreign policy. Silesia was rich; its population was mainly Protestant, and was still fitfully incommoded by Catholic Austria; it lay on the north side of the mountains which divided it from the rest of the Austrian dominions, and consisted of the upper part of the valley of the Oder, the chief Prussian river. In fact Prussia wanted it, and, in the person of Frederick, took it. Later in his reign, 1772, Frederick persuaded his old enemies, Austria and Russia, to join with him in applying the principles of the new diplomacy to slices of Poland. After his death the policy was extended, and two more partitions (1793 and 1795) obliterated that incorrigibly incompetent state from the map of Europe. Napoleon afterwards repainted the map of all Europe on the same principles, but he overdid it, and his bright new colours were rapidly washed off again. It may be doubted if the new Prussian diplomacy was really a step backward. Transparent hypocrisies are not generally worth preserving.

Frederick, like Bismarck after him, began with a cycle of

wars, and, when he had got what he wanted, rested in peace. The domestic statesmanship of the latter half of the reign is simply an enormous extension of the modest undertakings of the Great Elector. Frederick was the model "enlightened despot," fostering the strength and efficiency of his people as carefully as he fostered the strength and efficiency of his army. It is this that distinguished him from the vulgar militarists such as Louis XIV., or Napoleon in his later stages. His government co-operated with the people, and intervened with restless activity in all directions; we find a state-subsidised housing scheme, free distributions of grain and live-stock in areas devastated by war, and a resolute, though quite unsuccessful, attempt to secure universal compulsory education. The Germans of Prussia learnt, as no people in Europe had learnt before, to look to their government for help and organisation.

But it is the fate of hereditary despotisms that the efficiency of the government depends on the character of the prince. The three Frederick Williams [1] who followed Frederick the Great were all in their different ways incompetent, and the world had to wait till Bismarck for a revival of the authentic "Prussianism." Six years after the death of Frederick the Great, the French Revolution declared war upon Austria and Prussia, and the disunion and political incompetence of Germany was exhibited as tragically as in the Thirty Years War. Prussia and Austria were much more interested in the partitioning of Poland than in the French war. The French were soon at the Rhine, and far beyond it. Each of the great German states made wars and treaties with alternating rashness and pusillanimity, and the lesser states, such of them as were not obliterated from the map, sold themselves to France and were brigaded into the Napoleonic Confederation of the Rhine. The Treaty of Tilsit (1807) took away from Prussia all territory west of the Elbe, and left the

[1] Frederick William II. 1786-1797, Frederick William III. 1797-1840, Frederick William IV. 1840-1861.

remainder garrisoned by Napoleon's soldiers. Austria submitted two years later, after her fourth warlike speculation, to golden instead of iron chains, and the heir of all the Roman Emperors provided " the Corsican " with an archduchess as his wife.

But in the midst of these humiliations a new vision of Germany was conceived, a vision animated by the principles of nationalism and of liberalism. Mere hatred of the French oppression was converted by lofty spirits, such as the poet Arndt and the philosopher Fichte, into a longing for a Germany united and free. An accident enabled Prussia to put herself at the head of this movement, which she alone of existing German states was in a position to lead. A few months after the treaty of Tilsit, Napoleon ordered Frederick William III. to dismiss his minister, Hardenberg, and to accept Stein in his place. Stein was known to Napoleon as a skilful financier, and the only man likely to be able to raise sufficient money to pay the crushing indemnity that France had imposed on Prussia. But Stein was much more than this. In the brief year of office allowed him before Napoleon ordered his dismissal and outlawry, he introduced a series of reforms culminating in a scheme for semi-parliamentary government. The scheme was never brought into operation, but its mere conception exercised a profound influence on the political thought of Germany.

In 1812 Prussia was compelled to furnish contingents of troops for Napoleon's Russian campaign. On the last day of that terrible year, when the ruin of the French invading army had been consummated, a Prussian general named York took the law into his own hands, and, with the troops at his disposal, went over to the Russian side. It was the most commendable treason in history, and the signal for a great rising in arms of the Prussian people, which swept the bewildered Hohenzollern along with it. The Czar, powerfully influenced by Stein, who had long been an exile at his court, undertook to throw the weight of Russia into the

task of driving Napoleon from Germany. In return, by the treaty of Kalisch, Prussia agreed to surrender to Russia the greater part of its claims to Polish territory,[1] and to receive compensation in the Rhinelands. No one, not even Stein, seems to have realised at the time the significance of this exchange, and the immense profit Prussia would draw from the bargain. What Prussia surrendered was Polish; what she gained was German. The more completely and typically German Prussia became, the better would she be fitted to lead the new German nationalist movement. But the practical men had not yet discovered that movement; it was assumed to be a fad of poets and philosophers.

There was, however, one practical man who had discovered the menace of German nationalism and was determined to defeat it; the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich. Prussia might, some day, if she knew her business, gather to herself all Germany north of the Bohemian mountains in fulfilment of the nationalist aspiration. Austria, ruling or aspiring to rule a polyglot empire of Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Serbs, and Italians, could only regard the new nationalism as a worse enemy than Napoleon himself. Stein was already building up vast schemes for a German federal state with a German federal parliament. Metternich saw that the very existence of Austria depended on the defeat of this scheme, and the course of the war in 1813 enabled him to achieve his purpose. Napoleon had got together in Germany an army that proved more than a match for the Russians and Prussians. Austria was neutral, and could sell her support to either party. Had Napoleon been willing to listen to the dictates of common prudence, he could have secured the

[1] Prussia surrendered most of her gains from the second and third partitions. She retained (with the addition of Posen) those of the first, *i.e.* Frederick the Great's, partition, namely the province of West Prussia, connecting Brandenburg with East Prussia, which had been united to Bradenburg since 1618. At the date of the treaty of Kalisch, the territory in question formed part of the Napoleonic Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

Austrian Alliance for himself ; but he was mad, and Metternich turned to the Czar and the King of Prussia. The first question at issue was the fate of the princes of the minor states of Germany, who had sold themselves to Napoleon and entered the Confederation of the Rhine. Stein advocated their deposition, as a preliminary to German union. Metternich insisted that their rights should be respected and their complete independence guaranteed. All the obvious arguments were in favour of Metternich's case ; it was contended that a generous offer to the princes would detach them from Napoleon, and thus shorten the war ; it was contended that deposition was a dangerous and Jacobinical precedent to establish, and that a certain amount of divinity might be held to hedge even a member of the Confederation of the Rhine, provided he was not also a member of the Bonaparte family ; finally, there was the argument of an Austrian army, 200,000 strong, ready to join the allies if they would but say the word. They said the word. The treaty of Teplitz, signed by Russia, Prussia and Austria, sealed the fate of Napoleon ; it also sealed the fate of Germany until the day of Bismarck.

The Treaty of Vienna, the work of the Congress which sat in judgment on the map of Europe after the downfall of Napoleon, did little more than register agreements already binding upon the Allies. Prussia surrendered the Polish claims, as agreed, and received Westphalia and also part of Saxony. Austria took her spoils in non-German territory, and gained Lombardy and Venice. As for " Germany," a Federation (*Bund*) was constructed to replace the antique shams of the Holy Roman Empire. The German map was simplified. Before the great wars of the Revolution, the states of the Empire had numbered something over three hundred and fifty, a " mosaic of political curiosities " ; of these thirty-nine survived the ordeal of the Viennese map-makers, the remaining three hundred being absorbed by their larger neighbours. Of the thirty-nine states, the chief,

after Austria and Prussia, were the four kingdoms of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony, and Hanover, the last being ruled, until 1837, by the King of England. The smallest states had only a few thousand inhabitants. The thirty-seven lesser states, taken together, were about equal in area to the kingdom of Prussia. Each one of the thirty-nine was declared to be absolutely independent except for the fact that it was forbidden to enter into alliances with foreign powers. The only bond of union between the members of the Federation was a Diet of Frankfort, under Austrian presidency, consisting of nominees of the thirty-nine governments, which were, in nearly every case, hereditary despotic monarchies.

Thus, instead of a parliament, Germany had a council of diplomatists. Nationalism and Liberalism had won the war, but they had lost the peace.

(ii) THE GERMAN REVOLUTION IN 1848

The thirty-three years of repression and stagnation that lie between Waterloo and the German Revolution are inseparably associated with the name of Metternich. That astute politician remained immovable at his post in Vienna, and, under his skilful guidance, Austria exercised more real control over the affairs of Germany than she had ever done before. The diplomacy of this ingenious old reactionary succeeded, where the resplendent prestige and military prowess of Charles V. had completely failed. The Diet of Frankfort might well have appeared to be as powerless for good or evil as the present League of Nations, which, in its constitution, it somewhat resembled. There was no federal executive to carry out the decrees of the Diet, no federal army except on paper, and no power of reaching a decision on any matter of importance except by a unanimous vote. None the less, the exercise of much artfulness gave Austria the control of policy within most of the thirty-seven minor

states. The twin bogeys of nationalism and liberalism were still abroad; would it not be well if princes postponed all experiments in parliamentary assemblies, and broke the promises they might have made in the exciting days of 1813? And if such a course of action appeared to provoke displeasure, would it not be well to muzzle the press, and to prohibit public meetings? So Austria thought, and clearly it was the prudent course. Again, ideas of nationalist union were closely connected with ideas of absorption within the Prussian monarchy. Prussia was Ahab, and thirty-seven apprehensive Naboths found their Elijah in Vienna, and only hoped that, unlike that prophet, he would not come to the rescue too late.

But Metternich achieved a greater triumph; he converted Ahab himself. Frederick William III., pious, kindly, weak in understanding and infirm of purpose, followed obediently in the footsteps of Austria, conquered by the diplomacy of Metternich as surely as he had been conquered by the armies of Napoleon. The state which had everything to gain by the overthrow of the system of 1815 became its stolid adherent. For Prussia, though a large state, and reckoned by courtesy one of the Great Powers, had urgent need of expansion if she were to become a great power in reality. Her only ports were on the Baltic, the mouth of which was closed by Denmark and Sweden. Kiel was Danish; Hamburg was a free city and one of the thirty-nine; and the terms of the Federation guaranteed the inviolability of all existing German state frontiers. One achievement alone can be set down to the credit of Prussian statesmanship during this dreary period, the building up of the customs union or *Zollverein*, which bound all Germany outside Austria into a single commercial unity. It was one of those cases in which "Trade" preceded "The Flag."

Yet the liberal and nationalist movements lived on, and found their chief centres in the great German universities. The power for political good of the German professor was as striking in the first half of the nineteenth century as his

power for political evil at the beginning of the twentieth. A single German *Kultur*, of which all thoughtful Germans were justly proud, preceded and helped forward the political union.[1]

In 1822 the Prussian government had undertaken that no government loan should be raised without the approval of elected representatives of the people. In 1847 such a loan was required for the building of state railways, and Frederick William IV. summoned an Estates General, consisting of representatives of the nobles, the towns, and the peasantry, to sanction the loan. The antique formation of this assembly, suspiciously resembling the Estates General of the ill-fated Louis XVI. of France, suggested, as was indeed the fact, that the latest Hohenzollern was no Liberal, but a romantic dreamer of mediaeval dreams. When his creation assembled, he had a rude awakening into the dangerous realities of the nineteenth century. The Estates demanded a written constitution with a parliamentary system on English lines, refused to sanction the loan, and were dissolved in anger. Among the small minority of members who championed the King against the Liberals was Otto von Bismarck.

Bismarck, who was born in 1815, came of a very old family of the country gentry, or *Junkers*; the Bismarcks were living on the land and serving the Margraves of Brandenburg a hundred years before the coming of the first Hohenzollern in 1415. In his early years he developed a love of the country and of country pursuits, together with a certain contempt for town life, industrialism, and bureaucracy, that survived deep down in his nature to the day of his death. At the university he was more celebrated for his twenty-six duels than for diligence in academic pursuits. Two years in the diplomatic service disgusted him with the trivialities of

[1] In the same way, to take a parallel from a very different state of society, it is maintained that the creation of a united English Church, under Canterbury, in the seventh century, helped forward the union of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms.

BISMARCK
From a Portrait by F. von Lembach

subordinate officialdom, and in 1839 he withdrew to his old home as a country gentleman farming his own lands. His wild exuberance and intense physical vitality earned him the name of " mad Bismarck," and only his more intimate friends realised that, after a hard day on the farm or in the hunting field, the young squire settled down to the study of historians and philosophers, and read far into the night. He also entered into intimate friendship with a little group of religious enthusiasts among his neighbours. These were men who found in the idea of an eternal over-ruling God a kind of mystical confirmation of their own conservative instincts. Many years afterwards, when he was the foremost man in Europe, Bismarck said : " I know not whence I should derive my sense of duty, if not from God ; I firmly believe in a life after death, and that is why I am a royalist ; by nature I am disposed to be a republican." This statement is an epitome of Bismarck's religious convictions, which were as genuine as those of Gladstone. Unlike Gladstone's, however, there is nothing particularly Christian about them. They are closely bound up with a belief in the divine right of kings ; closely bound up also with that dangerous notion which Cromwell and the Puritans took over from the old Testament, that God is a god of battles, and that military victory is evidence of his approbation. After Sedan he speaks, in true Cromwellian phraseology, of the French Emperor as " stricken down by God's right hand." Such a religion suggests obvious parallels, also, with Napoleon's belief in his " star." But there is this important difference, that the star Bismarck followed was not his own, but the star first of Prussia and afterwards of Germany. It is the difference between a patriot, however ruthless, and an egoist, however enlightened. There is also reason for thinking that Napoleon's " star " figured more prominently in his speeches and *bulletins* than in his private meditations.

At the end of this quiet period Bismarck became engaged. The marriage that followed lasted until close on the end of

his life, and gave him nearly fifty years of unclouded domestic happiness.

Bismarck's performance in the Estates General of 1847 proved that he had all the gifts of a great parliamentarian. He was particularly trenchant and effective in pouring scorn upon the Prussian Liberal's love of foreign parallels, and slavish imitations of English methods. He emphasised the divine right of the Prussian King in terms which made him at once a royal favourite. He became, in fact, like Gladstone a few years earlier, " the rising hope of the stern unbending Tories." The stern unbending ones, in Prussia as in England, had many shocks and disappointments in store for them.

In February 1848 Paris overthrew the long tottering government of Louis Philippe and established a republic. The March that followed was the most nerve-shattering month in European history previous to August 1914. Revolutions exploded in every direction, releasing the long pent-up forces of nationalism and liberalism. Despotisms tumbled down; constitutions were hastily scribbled, and enacted by brand-new parliaments amidst the plaudits of mobs; frontiers were blotted out or redrawn; soldiers waited anxiously for orders from governments that had ceased to exist. In Vienna, Metternich fell like an illiberal Lucifer; Buda-Pesth proclaimed Hungarian independence; Prague proclaimed Czecho-Slovakian home rule; Venice and Lombardy overthrew Austrian dominion, and Piedmont came in arms to their assistance; Naples overthrew the worst dynasty in Europe; and the Pope proclaimed himself a Liberal, a fact scarcely less astonishing than if he had proclaimed himself a Protestant, though even this did not save him from expulsion at the hands of the nationalist republicans three months later. Germany did not escape the infectious enthusiasm. The mob rose in Berlin and fought the soldiers; the King surrendered to the mob, ordered the troops to withdraw from the city, and promised the constitution he

had refused the year before. Various minor princes submitted to similar experiences, and the Germans of Schleswig-Holstein rose against Denmark. At Frankfort a Liberal committee swept aside the Diet of diplomatists, and issued summonses for a National Assembly of the whole German nation. Only in Russia the Iron Czar, Nicholas I., sat unmoved on his throne, and awaited his opportunity to assist the forces of law, order, and reaction.

Bismarck was horrified and disgusted, and at once wrote his King a letter full of ardent loyalty, which Frederick William is said to have kept open on his writing-table, as an epistolary cordial, during the anxious months that followed. The Estates General was re-summoned, to prepare for the elections to the new Prussian parliament, and Bismarck was one of the two members who opposed the vote of thanks to the King for his capitulation to the revolution. He refused to seek election either in that parliament or in the Frankfort Assembly, but combined with his friends in founding a newspaper, which was to become the chief organ of Prussian conservatism, and, in days to come, a bitter assailant of himself. The Berlin parliament proved a gathering of impracticable agitators, mainly because most of the best men had preferred to go to Frankfort.

In October Windischgrätz, a resolute Austrian soldier acting on his own responsibility, stormed Vienna, overthrew the revolutionary government, secured the accession of the young Francis Joseph in place of his half-witted uncle, and brought into power a minister, Schwartzenberg, who combined the policy of Metternich with an unscrupulous ruthlessness that was all his own. Heartened by this example, Frederick William took to himself new ministers, sent the army to Berlin, and dissolved the Parliament. Bismarck had been suggested for a place in the new ministry, but this appeared to the King an excessively strong measure, and he wrote against his name: "only to be employed when the bayonet governs unrestricted." "I was a terrible *Junker* in

those days " was Bismarck's own comment, in later years, on his performances in the year of revolutions.

Meanwhile the more noble and dignified Assembly at Frankfort was at work on its difficult task. All the leading Liberals of Germany were there, among them the veteran poet, Arndt, whose song, " What is the German's Fatherland ? " had inspired to battle the soldiers of 1813. The problems that faced them were formidable enough. Should the new Germany be a monarchy or a republic ? In other words, was it possible to defy all the ancient dynasties and their armies, or was it necessary to come to terms with one of them, presumably the Prussian, and secure its armed support against the rest ? But first of all, what was Germany ? Did it include the Germans of Austria ? Was it possible to cut the Hapsburg Empire in half, or would it be more prudent to limit the ambitions of the moment to remaking a Germany from which the Austrian Germans were excluded ? Again, should the new state be centralised, like France and England, or should it be federal, and recognise the unwelcome fact of German " particularism," the fact that many Germans were more attached to their own states, even to their old dynasties, than to Germany ? Should the new constitution be a kind of monarchical equivalent of the United States, in which the old dynasties survived as constitutional partners of subordinate state-assemblies ? It would be ridiculous to accuse the Assembly of incompetence on the ground that it did not solve all these problems in a few short months. None the less, while the debates prolonged themselves, the Austrian and Prussian monarchies recovered their feet. The Germans of Schleswig-Holstein applied to the Assembly for help against Denmark. The Assembly could do nothing, but the Prussian government offered support ; thus the Assembly lost prestige.

By the end of the year it was plain that Austria was an irreconcilable foe ; but it was just possible that rivalry with Austria and the remnants of liberal sentiment might lead

Frederick William to accept the Frankfort crown, the offer of which was voted to him by a narrow majority in March 1849. Had he accepted the offer he would have become a constitutional king, owing authority to a parliament, and Prussia would have been absorbed into a liberalised Germany. For many reasons, he refused. One reason was his recovered belief in his divine right, and that of his fellow German princes ; another reason, unavowed and perhaps unneeded for fixing his decision, was the fact that acceptance would have involved war with Austria, and that in that war Prussia would have been beaten. The army of Prussia was no longer what it had been in the days of Frederick the Great. The Frankfort Assembly thus failed to find a liberal solution of the German problem, and the remainder of its life was brief, inglorious, and unimportant. Bismarck, it need hardly be said, entirely approved his King's refusal.

A survey of the German revolution illustrates the fact that the " acid test " of revolutions in general is their impact upon regular armies. Military discipline is a form of hypnotism ; it creates, among those subjected to it, a public opinion which may be wiser or less wise than, but is certainly different from, the public opinion of the civilian population from which the soldiers are, often against their own will, abstracted. Thus, in the later stages of the French Revolution, the armies were keen for the prolongation of the war, while civilian France was sighing for peace. But for the peculiar psychology of armies, the monstrous later career of Napoleon would have been impossible. The test, then, of a popular revolution is this : is its idealism or insanity (call it what you will) strong enough to break down the hypnotism of military discipline, the first principle of which is obedience to established authorities ? The French Revolution succeeded because, whenever an army corps was brought within striking distance of Paris, the white heat of the revolution melted the iron bands of military discipline, and the army corps became part of the

forces of the revolution. The German Revolution failed because it failed to capture the armies of Austria and Prussia. And even if the King of Prussia had accepted the Frankfort crown, the upshot would probably have been decided by the fact that, of those two armies, the Austrian was the stronger.

The German Revolution had a curious Prussian aftermath. Frederick William IV. was anything but a reactionary of the ordinary negative type. After the dissolution of the Berlin Parliament, he had issued a new constitution, with a parliament of sorts, carefully subordinated, and selected upon a singularly illiberal franchise. The Frankfort offer, though refused, had turned his mind in the direction of making a German experiment of his own. The governments of the various German states were invited to co-operate in a new union which was to be voluntary in character, any state being entitled to withdraw at its own discretion.[1] The states were invited to send members to a federal parliament, which should meet at Erfurt in 1850. Bismarck, once again, entirely disapproved of the scheme. He was at this date an uncompromising Prussian "particularist." Germany was of no interest to him whatever; he would have denied that there was any German problem worthy of the consideration of patriotic Prussians, except the problem of how much German territory Prussia ought to conquer and annex. As he saw it, the Erfurt parliament was simply a device for subjecting the Prussian crown to a partly alien democratic assembly.

Austria and the four kingdoms, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Hanover and Saxony, refused to have anything to do with the plan, but representatives of twenty-eight minor states joined the Prussian delegates at Erfurt. Bismarck was a member, and his attitude is shown by the sentence: "I know that what I have said will have no influence on your

[1] This constitution would therefore have resembled the constitution of the United States as interpreted by the secessionist Southern States at the outbreak of the American Civil War.

votes, but I am equally convinced that your votes will have no influence on the course of events." It was as Bismarck had said. Austria, in order to make plain to the world that the revolution was as if it had never been, summoned the old Diet to meet at Frankfort. The Prussian government denied that the old constitution of 1815 any longer existed. Austria therefore imperatively demanded the dissolution of the Prussian Union, and began to mobilise her forces for war with Prussia. A new Prussian minister was appointed, and set out post-haste to meet the Austrian Chancellor at Olmütz, where he signed a convention submitting to every one of Austria's demands. The Prussian Union vanished into space; the Diet of Frankfort reassembled; and the aged Metternich, in exile at Brussels, may be presumed to have chuckled.

The Convention of Olmütz was the most humiliating episode in the history of Prussia, worse than the battle of Jena, where at least the Prussians fought before they were defeated. The Crown Prince, who was likely one day to succeed his childless brother on the Prussian throne as William I., drew a moral from it, and determined that the efficiency of the Prussian army should be his first care. Bismarck, no doubt, formed a similar resolution in the event, which seemed unlikely, of his ever becoming Minister-President. None the less, the results of the Convention filled him with a delight which was shared by few of his countrymen. It was, no doubt, a diplomatic rebuff; but it brought to an end an experiment which he regarded with contempt and detestation. He is said to have danced three times round a table when he heard the news. His own verdict, written, at the end of his life, in his *Reflections and Reminiscences*, expounds the view he took, and never saw reason to change. "The fundamental error of Prussian policy in those days was that people fancied they could attain through publicist, parliamentary or diplomatic hypocrisies, results which could only be had by war or

readiness for it ; in such shape that they seemed forced upon our virtuous moderation as a reward for the oratorical demonstration of our ' German sentiment.' At a later date these were known as ' moral conquests ' ; it was the hope that others would do for us, what we dared not do for ourselves."

Meanwhile, since the policy of co-operation with Austria was to be revived, who so suitable for the post of Prussian envoy at Frankfort as the man who had taken pleasure in the submission of Olmütz ? To the Diet of Frankfort, accordingly, Bismarck was appointed.

(iii) BISMARCK AT FRANKFORT AND ST. PETERSBURG (1850-1862)

The twelve years that lay between the Convention of Olmütz and Bismarck's accession to power as Minister-President of Prussia contained several great events, but these were not great German events, nor great events in the life of Bismarck. For Prussia and for Germany the situation remained, with certain minor oscillations, what the failure of the revolution and the triumph of Austria had made it. Prussia remained hypnotised by the Austrian spell much as, to quote Bismarck's own parallel, a hen is hypnotised when its head is pushed to the ground and a chalk line drawn in front of it. But, while Prussia stood still, Bismarck developed. These years are, in fact, the period of his education in statesmanship. In 1850 he was still, in his own after-judgment, only a " terrible *Junker* " ; in 1862, he was mentally equipped to carry through one of the most astonishing feats of statesmanship that history records. We have now to follow the course of that education. But first it will be convenient to give a general idea of the series of events outside Germany by which that education was conditioned.

Over a large part of Europe the failure of the revolutions simply put back the clock, and restored to all appearances the situations which the revolutions set out to overthrow.

The Hapsburgs, thanks to help from Nicholas of Russia, replanted their heel upon the Bohemians, the Hungarians, and the Italians of Lombardy and Venice. The Pope was restored, having been cured of his liberalism in the school of adversity; also, Ferdinand of Naples, who had no liberalism to lose. But Prussia and Piedmont retained the parliamentary institutions that the revolutionary movement had given them. Though the Prussian *Landtag* was a body with a limited franchise and limited powers, it could no longer be said that Prussia, like Austria, was a despotism untempered by political debates. But it was in France that the revolution left the most interesting survivals.

When Louis Philippe, her last king, was overthrown in February 1848, France became a republic for much the same reason as an enclosed space becomes a vacuum if the air is extracted from it. But the great majority of Frenchmen dreaded republicanism, as a consequence of their unhappy experiences in the first French Revolution, and the dread was greatly accentuated by the socialist rebellion that deluged Paris in blood during June of the same year. Prince Louis Napoleon was elected president of the republic simply because his name suggested to the average voter that he would follow in the footsteps of his uncle, and give the country a government stronger and more stable than anything that the term "republic" seemed to imply. However, in the confusion that followed the fall of Louis Philippe, a National Assembly had been elected with a republican majority. Thus France found herself provided with a republican assembly representing her first thoughts, and a president representing her second thoughts.[1] The Assembly attempted to rivet upon France, in the form of a well-nigh unalterable constitution, the republican system that France no longer wanted. The President, after carefully feeling his way and assuring himself that the country was

[1] The Assembly was elected in April; the socialist rising took place in June; the President was elected in December.

behind him, carried out, in December 1851, his celebrated coup d'état, dissolved the assembly, and gave France a constitution modelled upon that of the Consulate of 1799. A year later, again following precedent, he assumed the imperial crown, as Napoleon III.[1]

In 1854 France and England entered as allies upon war with Russia. The causes of the Crimean War do not concern us here, but its results were important. It destroyed, for many years to come, the immense and universally alarming prestige of despotic Russia. When Metternich had fallen in 1848, people imagined that the innermost citadel of despotism and reaction had been stormed. They were wrong. Nicholas was far greater than Metternich, even though he was further away, and it was his imperturbable energy that had set Austria upon her feet again. During the six years that followed 1848 the might of Nicholas was the nightmare of the west. The only two effective forces of liberalism left in Europe were the people of England and the new ruler of France. It was the people of England who forced the government, and the ruler of France who led his people, into war with this Power of Darkness.[2] The fact that Turkey did not deserve their championship is, from our present standpoint, a minor matter. Nicholas died amidst the ruins of his power, and the new Tsar, Alexander II., had neither the capacity nor the inclination to play his father's part in the affairs of Europe. At the same time, the war made France incontestably the first power of Europe once again.

[1] "Napoleon II." was the son of the first Napoleon who, according to Bonapartist orthodoxy, was assumed to have reigned after the abdication of his father. He had died in 1832. This little piece of pedantry was presumably imitated from the Bourbons; the monarch restored in 1814 had called himself Louis XVIII., leaving "XVII" for the son of Louis XVI., who died or disappeared (for his fate is doubtful) in prison in 1795. Our own Charles II. also dated his reign from the execution of Charles I.

[2] On the Crimean War and also on the coup d'état see F. A. Simpson's admirable *Louis Napoleon and the Recovery of France.*

Three years after the end of the Crimean War the French Emperor embarked on another enterprise, and one far nearer to his heart, the expulsion of Austria from Lombardy and Venice. But here he not only over-estimated his own strength but found himself in partnership with an ally much more astute than himself, Cavour, the Prime Minister of Piedmont. The French and Piedmontese armies drove the Austrians from Lombardy, but could do no more. Napoleon made peace with Austria, but Cavour, deserted by his ally, fell back upon the forces of revolutionary nationalism. Garibaldi was let loose upon Sicily and Naples, and an astonished Europe beheld the creation of a united Kingdom of Italy, lacking only Venice, which remained to Austria, and Rome, which, since the papal restoration, had been garrisoned by the French.[1]

We return to Bismarck where we left him, on his appointment as representative of Prussia on the Diet of Frankfort.

It has often been said that residence abroad is the best kind of liberal education. At Frankfort, Bismarck, hitherto a Prussian of the Prussians and a despiser of "Germany," was residing abroad. Here he quickly learnt that the set of political notions which had led him to take pleasure in the Convention of Olmütz, were simply the ignorance of a provincial mind. The Austria of his assumptions, the Austria that was willing to treat Prussia as a friend and an equal in the affairs of Germany, did not exist and had never existed. If Prussia was to become, in fact as well as in name, a Great Power, the road lay over the prostrate body of Austria. If the lesser German states could be won on to

[1] We have hitherto omitted to record that, during the revolutions of 1848 and 1849, Pius IX., having shown that his liberalism did not include any sympathy with Italian nationalism, was expelled by the republicans, and that one of Napoleon's first acts as President of the French republic had been to restore the Pope, with French bayonets. This he did partly to satisfy public opinion in France and partly because he believed, mistakenly, that a pope restored by France would be less likely to forsake his liberalism than a pope restored, as he otherwise would have been, by reactionary Austria.

Prussia's side, well and good ; if not, they must be prostrated also. In any case, even as allies, they would be insufficient ; allies, or at least friends, must be found abroad. The first need for Prussia was to discover an intelligent foreign policy, which would give her friends outside Germany. " Hitherto," he wrote in 1857 to a friend, " we have no alliances and carry out no foreign policy, but content ourselves with picking up the stones that fall in our garden and brushing off, as well as we can, the mud that is flung at us."

From 1850 to 1858, Manteuffel, the capitulator of Olmütz, was Minister-President of Prussia. He was a personal friend of Bismarck's, but a weak man. Throughout his ministry Bismarck remained in intimate and, according to English notions, constitutionally improper relations with the King. As he says himself in his *Reflections and Reminiscences*, " the King frequently sent for me to frighten the minister." On several occasions Frederick William pressed Bismarck to join the ministry, but he refused. Though he realised, no doubt, that he could quickly have ousted Manteuffel from the leadership of the government, he felt that leadership itself, in conjunction with so irresolute a master as Frederick William, would be labour lost. He was better employed studying Europe at Frankfort. When, afterwards, Bismarck became Minister-President, he secured and enforced a rule that no minister or official of any kind should enter into political communication with the King except through himself. Bismarck could permit no Bismarcks.

The Crimean War seemed to Bismarck to give Prussia a chance of launching a foreign policy. Austria was quite as much interested as England, and decidedly more interested than France, in keeping Russia out of the Balkan peninsula. She acted from the first in diplomatic co-operation with the Western Powers. Prussia, like the hen of Bismarck's analogy, prepared to act as chorus to Austria, and German liberalism was full of sympathy for the assailants of Russia. Bismarck ruled out from his consideration all questions

concerning the merits of the dispute which caused the war. All the affairs of the Balkans, as he said on a later occasion, were not worth the bones of one Pomeranian grenadier. The only question for a Prussian was, how could Prussia fish for her own interests in the troubled waters? Here was the alliance of Austria and Russia broken, and Austria embarking on a Balkan policy which was of no interest to her German clients. Prussia's true policy was clearly to adopt a resolute neutrality, inclining towards informal friendship with Russia. This would secure the friendship of Russia, and might possibly rally to the Prussian side the minor German princes who wished to dissociate themselves from Austria's Balkan ambitions. Throughout the war, however, Prussian policy vacillated, and though she was allowed a place at the Congress of the Great Powers, which drew up the Treaty of Paris when all was over, she figured very obviously as the "poor relation" of the family gathering.

If Russia was a possible friend, so was France. Bismarck was sent on a special mission to Paris in 1857, and formed the very just impression that "people exaggerate the intellect, and underrate the heart" of the French Emperor. He regarded with entire contempt the popular German view that France was the natural and eternal enemy of Germany. All that talk about natural and eternal enemies seemed to him a mere misuse of the experience of history. Equally absurd was it to treat Napoleon as a natural enemy simply because he was the "heir of the revolution." Revolutionists at home were enemies no doubt, but revolutionists abroad might be very useful allies. Richelieu had suppressed Protestants at home, but had based his victorious foreign policy on an alliance with Protestants abroad. Bismarck realised that Napoleon was hostile to Austria, as the oppressor of his beloved Italy; also that he was well disposed, in his vague way, to the cause of nationalism in all countries, and that he would look with a friendly eye on an enlargement of Prussia as a step towards a national union of Germany.

telegram from the same source. When Bismarck interviewed the King, he found him sitting at his table, with an act of abdication, already signed, in front of him. The old soldier's conscience—with which Bismarck was to have many struggles in later years—would not allow him to destroy the parliamentary constitution by a coup d'état, but he refused to continue to reign without the army that his professional training told him he required. He asked Bismarck whether, in these circumstances, he could undertake the leadership of the government. Bismarck accepted, and the act of abdication was torn in pieces.

During Bismarck's brief embassy in Paris, he had paid a visit to London and had had a conversation with Disraeli. "I shall soon be compelled," he said, "to undertake the leadership of the Prussian government. My first care will be, with or without the help of parliament, to reorganise the army. . . . When the army has been brought to such a state as to command respect, then I will take the first opportunity to declare war on Austria, burst asunder the German Confederation, bring the middle and smaller states into subjection, and give Germany a national union under the leadership of Prussia." Among Bismarck's audience was an envoy of Saxony, one of these same middle and smaller states. "Take care of that man," said Disraeli to the Saxon; "he means what he says."

(iv) THE EXCLUSION OF AUSTRIA FROM GERMANY (1862-1866)

At almost the same date two men, probably in their very different ways the two greatest statesmen of the nineteenth century,[1] acceded to power in their respective countries:

[1] The only possible rival claimant to this distinction is Cavour. Bismarck, in the course of familiar conversation near the end of his life, declared that not only Cavour, but also Kruger, were greater than himself, in that they accomplished their tasks without the aid of a powerful army. This may perhaps be regarded as an anti-English joke. Bismarck died before Kruger's downfall.

Lincoln and Bismarck. Both were received by the public opinion interested in them with a mixture of ridicule and contempt. Even to his supporters, Lincoln was simply a useful popular figure-head, a genial backwoodsman who would presumably be wise enough to entrust himself to the guidance of the professional politicians of his party ; to his enemies he was a monstrosity ; cartoonists discovered that he resembled a gorilla. With much the same degree of insight, Europeans read, in Bismarck's appointment, the Prussian King's defeat. The choice of this wild *Junker* seemed the last desperate throw of a ruined gambler. The Frenchman, Grammont, who was to lead his country blindfold into Bismarck's trap eight years later, declared sagely that " Bismarck had no grasp of politics."

Bismarck's view of the constitutional crisis which had brought him to power was very simple, and also legally correct. The reconstruction of the army, taken by itself, was a matter within the sole discretion of the King, as commander-in-chief.[1] Parliament was only concerned with the additional taxation which the army reforms involved. The budget had been amended, in a sense rejecting the new taxation, in the Lower House ; the House of Lords had re-inserted the taxes, and rejected the amendments. A deadlock thus ensued for which the Prussian constitution contained no provision. That being so, the constitution had broken down, and thereby become inoperative ; hence, it was necessary for the Crown, which existed before and independently of the constitution, to resume its full powers. So the taxes were raised, the press gagged, and the army reformed. Prussia produced no Hampdens on this occasion, but in other respects the parallel from English history was striking enough in a superficial way, and Bismarck was not ashamed to accept it. " What will come of it ? " said the

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King, in a moment of despondency. "Already I see the place before my castle on which your head will fall, and then mine will fall too." "Well, as far as I am concerned," answered Bismarck, "I cannot think of a finer death than one on the field of battle or the scaffold. I would fall like Lord Strafford; and your Majesty, not as Louis XVI., but as Charles I. That is quite a respectable historical figure." But Bismarck was a much more resourceful statesman than Strafford, and he had a better royal partner.

Before he had been a year in office, Bismarck had the satisfaction of lifting the hen's beak from the chalk line at last. Austria, realising that the political pace was quickening, and that even the Diet of Frankfort, as at present constituted, could not last for ever, proposed a Congress of Princes for a remodelling of the German Federation. The King of Prussia refused to attend, and the Congress in consequence broke up without achieving any result.

The same year, 1863, produced a new European crisis, and thus enabled Bismarck to launch Prussia at last upon an intelligent foreign policy. The Poles rose in rebellion against Russia, and England, France, and Austria, the first two from motives of disinterested liberalism and the last from jealousy of Russia, offered diplomatic support, and drew up a Joint Note demanding that Russia should grant self-government to her Polish provinces. Among German Liberals the unselfish enthusiasms of 1848 were rekindled, and strong sympathy was expressed with the Polish cause. Even in Russia there was now a strong Liberal party which supported the Poles, because it believed that the grant of a parliament to Poland would be the prelude to the establishment of a parliament for Russia. The Tsar himself had recently emancipated the twenty million serfs in his empire, and seemed to incline towards the Liberal view. For Bismarck the Polish question was a matter of life and death. Poland was the Achilles' heel of Prussia, for the Poles were the only foreign and permanently discontented section of

the King of Prussia's subjects, and the Polish district of Posen stretched to within a hundred miles of Berlin. A free Poland within Russia would act as a magnet to the Poles outside it, and Prussia might in no long time find half the conquests of Frederick the Great wrested from her.

No time was to be lost. Bismarck refused to join the authors of the Joint Note, and despatched an envoy to St. Petersburg, carrying an autograph letter from the King, proposing that Russia and Prussia should co-operate in face of the common danger. Russian troops were to be allowed to cross the Prussian frontier in pursuit of their prey, and Prussia mobilised two army corps for their assistance in case of need. It is not enough to say that Bismarck supported Russian policy; he played an important part in deciding it. The Poles were suppressed once more, and Prussia gained a powerful friend outside Germany.

Before the end of this eventful year, 1863, Frederick VII. of Denmark died without heirs in direct succession, and the reluctant diplomatists of Europe found themselves confronted, not for the first time, with the terrible Schleswig-Holstein question. Lord Palmerston once declared in his airy way that only three persons ever understood the Schleswig-Holstein question: the Prince Consort, who was dead, a German professor, who had gone mad, and himself, who had forgotten all about it. It is possible that these three pundits had mastered all the perplexing legal technicalities with which the problem bristled. Such a study was certainly well-suited to the minute laboriousness of the Prince Consort, though a doubt may be entertained whether Lord Palmerston could ever have had sufficient patience for the task. Bismarck certainly proved that he also understood the Schleswig-Holstein question; but he understood it in quite another manner. He understood Prussia's interests in relation to it, and gradually, as the controversy grew, he came to see how to use it as a lever for thrusting Austria out of Germany, and hoisting Prussia into a position which made her

not only master of Germany but also the greatest power in Europe. The diplomatic game of chess played during the two years and a half that lay between the death of the King of Denmark and the outbreak of war with Austria (November 1863 to June 1866) surpasses in intricacy even the legal technicalities of the Schleswig-Holstein problem. We shall limit ourselves to a bare outline of both, content to omit much so long as the general character of Bismarck's statesmanship is revealed.

The Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein had been united for several hundred years to the crown of Denmark, but in them, and not in Denmark, the so-called Salic law prevailed, whereby inheritance could not be transmitted to or through a woman.[1] Holstein was inhabited by Germans and was also a member of the German Federation, the King of Denmark being, as Duke of Holstein, represented in the Diet of Frankfort. Schleswig was outside the Federation, and had a mixed population of Germans and Danes. The Duchies enjoyed, in relation to the rest of Denmark, a considerable measure of " home rule." Under the influence of nineteenth century nationalism, Denmark was anxious to merge Schleswig into Denmark, and was willing to let Holstein go back into Germany. However, there was, or was supposed to be, an ancient charter declaring that Schleswig and Holstein should never be separated, and the German majority in the two duchies taken together was determined that this inseparability should be maintained.

In 1848 the Germans of the duchies had risen in vain against Denmark, and the problem was afterwards submitted to a Congress of the Great Powers in London. This Congress declared that the Danish Kingdom must be maintained intact; it declared Christian of Glucksburg heir to both Denmark and the Duchies on the death of Frederick (*i.e.* the Frederick who died in 1863), and secured from the Duke of

[1] It will be remembered that this same " law " was held to debar our own Edward III.'s claim to the French crown.

Augustenburg a renunciation of his claims to succeed Frederick, by Salic law, in the Duchies. But the Congress also decreed that Denmark must respect the local privileges of Schleswig, and this stipulation had certainly not been observed. Was not therefore the Treaty of London invalidated ?

As soon as King Frederick died, the Prince of Augustenburg, son of the Duke above-mentioned, maintaining that he was not bound by his father's act of renunciation, came forward and claimed the duchies. He was supported by the great body of German nationalist opinion, and by all the lesser member of the Diet of Frankfort, who had, in any case, not been parties to the Treaty of London. A repetition of the rebellion of 1848 seemed imminent.

For Bismarck the only question was : What was Prussia's interest ? Prussia's interest was to annex the duchies, for they contained the harbour of Kiel, and the isthmus across which a Kiel canal might be dug. Annexation by Prussia might, however, prove impossible. In that case, Prussia must insist that whoever obtained the duchies bound himself by treaty to relations of close dependence upon her. What was entirely contrary to Prussian interests was that one more ordinary German state should be created, one more parasite of Austria in the Diet of Frankfort ; rather than that, it would be better that the duchies should remain in discontented allegiance to Denmark.

The immediate situation enabled Bismarck to take a line that gave old-fashioned Prussians unexpected pleasure. He sought the alliance of Austria. If there was one power that disliked revolutionary nationalism more than Prussia, it was Austria. Let Austria and Prussia ignore the nationalists and the Diet ; let them take their stand on the Treaty of London, thus robbing England of all ground for intervention ; let them demand from Denmark an abandonment of the measures she had taken in Schleswig which were contrary to the Treaty of London, and, if she refused, declare war

and occupy the duchies. So said, so done. The Austro-Prussian ultimatum to Denmark, like the celebrated ultimatum of Austria to Serbia in July 1914, was so framed that it was impossible for Denmark to accept it, and, to make assurance doubly sure, Bismarck led the Danes to think that England would support them, though he knew that we should not. The rash language of English statesmen and the obstinate credulity of the Danes must share the blame for the success of this last little piece of devilry.[1]

So Denmark stood firm, and Austria and Prussia went to war with her in February 1864. The Danes were, of course, defeated, and, by the Treaty of Vienna, the duchies were ceded to Austria and Prussia in October.

What was now to be done with them? Austria, already alarmed at the step she had been led to take, began to favour the Augustenburg solution. Only one ruler in Europe favoured annexation by Prussia, and that, by a curious irony in view of after events, was Napoleon. The French Emperor, himself the elected of the people, despised all arguments based on law and inheritance; he believed in nationalism, and in the division of Europe into a small number of strong monarchies. As he had helped to build a united Italy, and had won his reward in the annexation of Nice and Savoy to France, might he not play the same part in the affairs of Germany? "Similar, but not quite the same," was Bismarck's private opinion. Prussia was much stronger in herself than Piedmont had been; the friendliness of Napoleon was useful to her, but she did not require his active assistance, and she certainly would not be inclined to pay him for it.

Meanwhile the relations of the victorious allies in the duchies were becoming strained. Augustenburg had estab-

[1] Lord Palmerston was very active in vocal championship of the Danes at this time. The Prince of Wales had married a Danish princess, afterwards Queen Alexandra, early in 1863. None the less, Queen Victoria was strongly pro-Prussian in her attitude, for such, she believed, would have been the line taken by the late Prince Consort.

lished himself in what he regarded as his rightful territories, and Austria was openly favouring his pretensions. Bismarck now (February 1865) stated the conditions under which Prussia would allow the duchies to become a new German state. Kiel was to be a Prussian port, and Prussia was to be allowed to make and control a Kiel canal; Prussia was to control the railways and the postal service, and the army was to be a detachment of the Prussian army. Even Mr. Shaw's Englishman, who said that the solution of the Irish problem was "Home Rule under English control," would never have asked as much as this. The terms were made to be rejected, and rejected they were.

The ground was thus prepared for an Austrian war, but Bismarck preferred to wait. He was not yet sure of Europe. Napoleon was now a vacillating invalid, much influenced by the ultra-Catholic party led by his Empress, and Bismarck feared an alliance betwen Austria and France. He also wanted to secure the alliance of Italy by promising her Venice as the reward of victory. So an Austro-Prussian treaty was made at Gastein, in August 1865. Austria was to administer Holstein and Prussia Schleswig, till further arrangements were made. It was clearly no more than a temporary makeshift; as Bismarck said, it "papered over the cracks." Ten more months; a visit to Napoleon at Biarritz with much vague talk of "compensations" for France in the event of Prussian victory; a long and difficult negotiation with the highly distrustful Italians; a strenuous tuning up of the conscience of the King of Prussia;[1] and the work was done.

Bismarck was now prepared to fight and to defeat the

[1] Bismarck writes to the King: "It is contrary to my feelings, I may say to my faith, to attempt to use influence or pressure on your paternal feelings with regard to the decision of peace or war. This is the sphere in which, trusting to God alone, I leave it to your Majesty's heart to steer for the good of the Fatherland; my part is prayer, rather than counsel;" after which prelude he again lays before the King the insuperable arguments in favour of war. (Quoted from Headlam's *Bismarck*, p. 251.)

armies not only of Austria, but, if they were so foolish as to intervene, of all the other German states as well. Indeed, their intervention might prove to be politically convenient. But he knew that the time was now at hand when it would be very necessary to conciliate the public opinion of Germany at large ; and even Germans are not convinced by military victories alone. No German liberal or nationalist outside Prussia could feel enthusiasm for the annexation of the duchies by the Prussian crown. Some grander, some more inspiring, element must be introduced, even at the eleventh hour, into the *casus belli*, nothing less, in fact, than a solution of the whole German problem on lines calculated to stir once again the enthusiasms of 1848. In April 1866 Bismarck instructed his envoy at Frankfort to propose the creation of a parliament, elected by universal suffrage, to assist in the management of common German affairs. This bolt from the blue may be held to have missed its immediate aim. German liberalism refused to believe that Saul had come among the prophets, except as a wolf in sheep's clothing. None the less, this move is one of the decisive landmarks in Bismarck's career. It marks his final breach with his old Prussian Junkerism ; his realisation that he was called to be a German and not merely a Prussian statesman ; and that the forces of liberalism must be respected, conciliated, and used.

The last steps had now been taken, and Bismarck accused Austria of encouraging the candidature of Augustenburg in Holstein, and thus breaking the treaty of Gastein. It has always been a trump card of Prussian diplomacy that she can mobilise her admirable army more rapidly than her neighbours, so that, when war is imminent, the other side must always, unless it is to be at a disadvantage, take the first military measures. Thus all Prussia's wars are " defensive " wars. Austria, in terror, began to mobilise, and proposed to bring the question of the duchies before the Diet. From that moment she was delivered into her enemy's hands.

The war that followed has been called the Six Weeks War ; the actual duration of hostilities was five weeks and three days. Nearly all the German states joined Austria. Hanover and the north-western states were subdued in a week ; Bavaria and the south-west took a little longer ; Austria was decisively defeated at the battle of Königgrätz, or Sadowa, on the nineteenth day of the war. For Bismarck, the military campaign was a very brief and strenuous holiday between the diplomatic preparation for war and the diplomatic preparation for peace.

As soon as the victory was won, Bismarck found two obstacles barring the path he had marked out for his country : the Prussian commanders with the King at their head, and Napoleon. The views of the Prussian military leaders represented simply the old Prussian Junkerism, intoxicated by the triumph to which Bismarck had led them. Their only thought was the humiliation of Austria and the other defeated German states, and the enlargement of Prussia. Bismarck, on the other hand, was thinking of the new Germany ; he had decided in his own mind that Austria must be excluded from Germany, but he realised that, once the exclusion was accepted, her age-long quarrel with Prussia would be ended, and that, if generously treated in all other respects, she could be made an invaluable ally. He also knew that even the minor dynasties of Germany were trees of far too ancient a growth to be rashly uprooted ; that the process of uprooting should be strictly limited to those few unfortunate trees which blocked the view from Prussian windows, and that the rest, instead of being unkindly lopped and disfigured, should be preserved as ornaments of the new German estate. It was only with immense pains and difficulty that he won his sovereign over from the military view.

Two days after the battle of Königgrätz a telegram arrived from Napoleon, stating that Austria requested French mediation. All the world outside Prussia had been astounded

by the overwhelming rapidity and completeness of the Prussian victory, but none more so than he. It is extremely difficult to disentangle the elements of intriguer and idealist in Napoleon's composition, but perhaps it would be true to say that, while he wished Prussia success, he wished her success with difficulty. He pictured a long, indecisive struggle, in which he would in due course intervene, as *tertius gaudens*, discovering a solution that would rescue both combatants from the mire in which they had involved themselves, and present France to the world once more as arbiter of Europe. Perhaps there would be another splendid Congress of Paris, like that which ended the Crimean War. Bismarck was determined not to submit the destinies of Prussia to the tender mercies of a European Congress ; rather than that he would fight France at once. Meantime the only thing to do was to meet the French proposals with courtesy and evasion, to advertise the moderation of the Prussian terms, allowing Napoleon to think that their moderation was the result of his own intervention, to discuss French " compensations " with the French ambassador, and, above all, to hasten on the treaty with Austria.

He succeeded, and Austria accepted the Prussian terms before Napoleon had taken any effective action. Napoleon's own advisers, in fact, succeeded in persuading him that his army could not face the risks of a Prussian war. The tragedy four years later was due to the fact that his advisers then advised him very differently.

The Treaty of Prague (August 1866) brought to an unhonoured end the German Confederation of 1815. Austria was excluded from all share in the affairs of Germany ; but, apart from the cession of Venice to Italy, she lost, thanks to Bismarck's victory over his king and military officers, not an acre of territory. All Germany north of the river Main, which flows into the Rhine near Frankfort, was formed into a North German Confederation. Most of the North German states survived intact as members of this

Confederation, but three of the largest, Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau, were annexed to Prussia, as were also Schleswig and Holstein. Prussia, thus enlarged, comprised more than seven-eighths of the territory of the Confederation. The three south-western kingdoms, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden, were left to themselves, separated both from Austria and from the North. Bismarck was very glad to gratify both France and the world by this evidence of moderation. Unlike Napoleon I., he knew the difference between enough and too much. South-west Germany, Catholic, cultured, and liberal, would prove a far more difficult morsel to digest than the north-western states. He would see to it that they came within the Prussian fold in course of time.

And now, when it was too late, before the final signature of the treaty, but after the cessation of hostilities, Napoleon came again upon the scene. From the first he had been hopelessly hampered in his negotiations with Bismarck by the difficulty of naming any particular " compensations " as the reward of his friendly neutrality. Hence nothing had ever been put in writing. If he demanded German territory, all Germany would be ranged against him ; if he demanded Belgian territory, all England. For himself he desired nothing ; but this he knew would be intolerable to France, and the elect of the people could not defy his own subjects after the manner of Bismarck. And, after all, was it not Bismarck himself who had always talked about " compensations," as if they were a matter of course ? So Benedetti, the French ambassador at Berlin, was ordered by his government to demand the surrender to France of the Palatinate and Mainz. But, whether or not Bismarck ever intended to substantiate his vague undertakings in the matter of compensations to France, he now considered himself absolved from whatever promises he may have made, by the inconvenient intervention of Napoleon after the battle of Königgrätz. He refused point-blank to surrender an inch of German territory, and caused the French demand to

be published in a French newspaper. This was a masterstroke. All Germany was filled with indignation ; most of all, the isolated south-western states, which were not only indignant but thoroughly alarmed. They proceeded to contract secret treaties with Prussia. Prussia guaranteed them their territory, and, in the event of a war of defence against French aggression, they undertook to place their armies under the control of the Prussian king. The first step towards the union of the south-west with the north was thus taken on the initiative of the south-west.

What would Bismarck do, now all was over, with the Prussian parliament, which had resisted every step on the road to victory ? The old conservatives and the soldiers hoped that he would crush it, as they thought it deserved. But Bismarck was far too wise to prolong old quarrels when, without any cost, he could make new friends. Liberalism would be such a new friend, and liberalism was needed as a bulwark of the new Prussianised Germany. So he tactfully requested the parliament to vote a Bill of Indemnity, condoning whatever unconstitutional actions the government might have committed. The passage of this measure marked a fatal split in the Liberal ranks. Only a minority of the Liberals opposed the bill. The majority came over to Bismarck, and, under the name of National Liberals, were, for many years to come, his steadiest supporters.

It remained to fashion the constitution of the new North German Confederation. This constitution deserves consideration, because it was, in all essentials, the constitution under which the German Empire was governed until the downfall of the Hohenzollerns in 1918.

The North German Confederation was, in certain aspects, a federal state, like the United States of America. But it was a federal state in which nearly all the states themselves were hereditary monarchies ; and one state, Prussia, was immensely larger than all the others put together. Thus, in place of an American elected president, the King of Prussia

was hereditary President, and the Minister-President of Prussia was Chancellor, of the Confederation. In place of the American elected Senate, there was a *Bundesrat*, consisting of the hereditary princes of the several states, with the Chancellor as its chairman. Each member had a number of votes that was roughly proportionate to the importance of the state he represented; but Bismarck wisely refrained from giving Prussia the voting strength to which it was proportionately entitled, for in that case Prussia alone would have outvoted all the rest, and the Council would have been a farce. The American House of Representatives was paralleled by the *Reichstag*, elected by universal (or rather, manhood) suffrage. Thus the promise made before the war was kept. Bismarck preferred manhood suffrage to any English system of limited franchise, partly because it was simpler, and partly because he held that any assembly thus elected would be less likely to be inconveniently liberal than one elected on a limited suffrage, for liberalism was essentially a middle-class creed. He did not foresee the rise of democratic socialism. In any case the *Reichstag* was, unlike its English and American equivalents, subordinated to the Upper House. The *Bundesrat* was the chief organ of government. The *Reichstag* was empowered to amend or veto only such legislation as the *Bundesrat* prepared for it, and its control over taxation was limited to a right to refuse assent to new taxes.

The keystone of the constitutional arch was, of course, the Chancellor himself, that is to say, Bismarck. He was sole responsible minister of the Confederation; the other ministers were his assistants and nothing more. Bismarck knew something of the storms and stresses to which an English prime minister is subjected within his own cabinet, and he was determined to have no cabinet government in Germany. Even within the *Bundesrat* there was little real check on his power, for the President (*i.e.* the King of Prussia) commanded the army, declared peace and war,

made treaties, and appointed officials, and all his acts required the signature of the Chancellor, his sole minister.

There was a little opposition to the proposed constitution, but it was swept aside. The issue, Bismarck told his critics, had been settled by the " iron dice " of war, and was not to be re-opened by parliamentary resolutions. Let them not waste any more precious time with their arguments. " Let us," he said, " put Germany into the saddle ; she will soon learn to ride."

(v) THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR (1867-1871)

After the humiliating failure of Napoleon's negotiations with Bismarck in 1866, it was quite certain that French public opinion would not allow the union of Germany to be completed without war. No doubt the French would have been wiser as well as more generous—the two virtues often go together—had they recognised that the Germans had as much right as themselves to be united in a single state. But France had profited by German divisions for so many centuries, that she could not endure to forego the advantages that these divisions gave her. Bismarck, on his side, welcomed the prospect of war. The problem of conciliating the Catholic south-west to Prussian hegemony would not in any case be easy, and a war, in which the troops of the south-west fought shoulder to shoulder against a foreign aggressor, would give the prospective union the best possible start and the best possible prospects. But the war must be a war of French aggression, in which France was clearly in the wrong. In 1867 there was a possibility of war, when Bismarck vetoed a French scheme for the purchase of Luxemburg from the King of Holland, but this did not strike Bismarck as a satisfactory *casus belli*, and he beat a retreat behind the smoke-screen of a European Congress, which proclaimed Luxemburg an independent neutral territory.

It was also necessary to secure the neutrality of the other Great Powers in the forthcoming struggle. England would stand aside, provided the neutrality of Belgium was respected. Russia was an old friend, and would also be glad to take advantage of the defeat of France to tear up the treaty imposed on her by France and England after the Crimean War. Austria was more dangerous, but she had been generously treated in 1866, and discretion would probably prove the better part of valour with her. Italy owed her very existence to Napoleon, but her gratitude, such as it was, had been obliterated by the French protection of the Pope, which excluded the new kingdom from what it considered its rightful capital, and the Clericalist party, now dominant in France, was not likely to make the one concession that might secure an Italian alliance.

Just as the problem of Schleswig-Holstein furnished the occasion of the Austrian war, so the occasion of the French war was found in the so-called Spanish Candidature. Bismarck's latest English biographer, Mr. Grant Robertson, says that the whole story of this candidature never has been and probably never will be told. Bismarck, and the very few others who could have told it, have preferred to take it with them to the grave. The account given in Bismarck's own *Reflections and Reminiscences* is no more than dust thrown in the eyes of an enquiring public. The truth of the matter would appear to be somewhat as follows.

In 1868 one of the numerous Spanish revolutions had dethroned Queen Isabella, and General Prim, on behalf of the revolutionary government, applied in vain to various Catholic princely families of Europe in search of a new occupant for the Spanish throne. Among others, he applied to Leopold, hereditary prince of Hohenzollern, whose brother, three years before, had been appointed King of Roumania. This family was only distantly related to the Hohenzollerns of Prussia ; oddly enough, it had a nearer blood-relationship with the family of Napoleon. None the less, it had bound

itself to the King of Prussia by close political bonds. Leopold's father had been Minister-President of Prussia in 1858,[1] and had, by an act of unprecedented devotion, surrendered his position as a sovereign ruler in his own small German state, and merged it in the dominions of the King of Prussia. The first offer of the Spanish throne to Prince Leopold was secretly made early in 1869; whether the suggestion came originally from Bismarck we do not know, but, once made, Bismarck seized upon it and pressed it, against the opposition of both the Prince and the King of Prussia, again and again. Bismarck's own statement,—"Politically I was tolerably indifferent to the entire question"—is simply a lie.

Bismarck's object in this long, subterranean negotiation, is not quite obvious. It is hard to believe that he envisaged it originally as furnishing a pretext for war with France; for, had not the French played their cards with a clumsy folly that no one could have foreseen, it would have made a very poor pretext for war. For why should Germany fight in order that a Catholic Hohenzollern should sit on the throne of Spain? It may be that he thought the success of the candidature would lead Napoleon to embroil himself in a war with Spain, and thus weaken his intended resistance to German union. It may be (but this seems even more unlikely) that he looked forward to having Spain as an ally in the future Franco-German war. It may be, as he asserts in his memoirs, that his sole interest was the development of commercial relations between Spain and Germany. Perhaps we make a mistake in demanding entire rationality of purpose even from a Bismarck. To the born intriguer, intrigue itself, quite apart from an end to be gained, must be a fascinating exercise. Perhaps Bismarck put his energies behind the Hohenzollern candidature without any clear idea of what he expected to come out of it.

In June 1870, after several refusals, Leopold accepted the

[1] Between the ministry of Manteuffel and that of Bismarck.

Spanish crown. Absolute secrecy had been observed, and the plan was that the Spanish *Cortes* should ratify the election before the world was informed of the candidature. By sheer accident, the facts came out before the *Cortes* met. The French government at once declared the election inadmissible, and protested to the Prussian government. Bismarck declared that the Prussian government had absolutely nothing to do with the matter, a statement true enough, apart from the fact that Bismarck was the Prussian government, and Bismarck, and none other, had driven Leopold to the steps of the Spanish throne. Then, after ten days of acrimonious excitement, Leopold withdrew his candidature.

It was the worst rebuff that Bismarck had ever received. If the French government had now behaved with ordinary prudence and commonsense, they would have secured one of the most striking diplomatic victories of the age;—a Hohenzollern prince withdrawn from the Spanish throne at a mere gesture of displeasure from Paris. But Grammont, who eight years before had said that Bismarck had no grasp of politics, could not leave well alone. He ordered his ambassador, Benedetti, to take the unusual step of seeking out the King of Prussia during his holiday at the watering place of Ems, and to demand from him a guarantee that the Hohenzollern candidature should never be renewed. The King very properly refused, and announced the circumstance of the interview and his refusal to Bismarck by telegram, authorising Bismarck to publish the facts at once if he thought fit. Bismarck published an abbreviated version of the telegram.[1] It had the effect he expected. Each nation felt itself mortally insulted, the Germans by the French request, the French by the German refusal. Bismarck saw that war was inevitable; he left to France the odium of declaring it. Exactly four weeks had passed between the acceptance of the Spanish throne and the French declaration of war (June 21–July 19, 1870).

[1] See the note at the end of this essay.

War being now declared, Bismarck made, through the press, one of his cleverest appeals to neutral opinion. During the negotiations for " compensations " in 1866, the French had prepared an elaborate scheme whereby, if the south-western states were united to Prussia, France should be allowed to acquire Belgium. Bismarck asked to have this scheme in writing. Having secured it, he took it away and gave no answer either of acceptance or rejection. Now the time for using it had come, and it was published in London, in the *Times*. Thus all the emotions roused in 1914 by the " scrap of paper " were in 1870 switched on to the side of Germany. English opinion was, on the whole, both divided and bewildered by the Franco-German War, until it appeared that France was decisively beaten. Then both the sporting instinct and the policy of maintaining the balance of power enlisted our sympathies for the weaker side.

The defeat of the armies of Napoleon was almost as rapid, and more complete, than the defeat of the Austrians four years earlier. Sedan was fought on September 2nd, and Napoleon and all the forces engaged in the battle became prisoners of war. Two days later, however, Paris proclaimed a republic, and resolved to fight to the last gasp against the surrender of French territory. It was claimed that the situation of 1814 had repeated itself, and that the punishment of Napoleon should be considered a sufficient atonement for France. The plea was scarcely reasonable, for it was notorious that it was France that had driven her diseased and bewildered Emperor into the war. So the struggle dragged on through the autumn and the winter. Paris fell in January, and, by the Treaty of Frankfort, signed in May 1871, France surrendered Alsace and Lorraine and undertook to pay an indemnity of £200,000,000.

Much has been said by anti-German writers about the coarse brutality, in speech and action, of the German leaders in their treatment of their defeated enemy.[1] It is difficult

[1] *e.g.* Grant Robertson, *Bismarck*, p. 278.

to be sure of reaching a right judgment on this matter. Certainly, courtesy and tact are not qualities in which the Prussian usually excels. Yet Jules Favre, who conducted many long negotiations with Bismarck during the later stages of the war, wrote: "I should be unfaithful to truth if I did not recognise that, in these mournful discussions, I always found the Chancellor eager to soften the cruelty of his requirements." It is impossible to deny that France had much less to complain of at the hands of the Germans in 1870 than Prussia at the hands of Napoleon I. sixty years before. The indemnity demanded was, by twentieth century standards, a trivial sum, as is proved by the fact that France paid it off in three years, without any apparent injury to her rapidly recovered prosperity. Indeed, there is ground for thinking that it was Germany rather than France that suffered by the indemnity, and that the commercial crisis of 1873 was caused, in part at least, by the influx of French goods.

In demanding the cession of Alsace and Lorraine as the fruits of victory, the German government acted, as after events showed, very unwisely. Bismarck himself stated in later years that he had desired to take only Alsace, and that the demand for Lorraine was forced upon him by the military authorities. Some historians treat this as a lie, and such it may be; but it is fairly certain that, if France had been willing to make peace after Sedan, only Alsace would have been demanded. The argument for taking Alsace was that Strasburg, close to the Rhine, was the gate into Germany, and that all history showed that, so long as France occupied this gate, she would constantly yield to the temptation to send her armies through it. But the reason why this temptation had proved so strong was, that there had been no pressure against the gate from the German side. Once a strong and united Germany had been created, this "gate" into Germany would have been automatically locked and barred from the outside, and its possession by France no longer a source of danger. The argument for

taking Lorraine was still less cogent, for Metz is the gate into France. Both provinces contained a considerable population that was German both by blood and by speech, but there is absolutely no doubt that, had a plébiscite been taken, a large majority would have voted against severance from France. Thus the transference of the two provinces was a definite step backwards from the principle of nationality which had been recognised ten years earlier in the plébiscites transferring Savoy and Nice to France, and uniting various provinces of Italy with the kingdom of Sardinia (Piedmont). The German government hoped that closer acquaintance would reconcile the population to its new rulers. It had the opposite effect, and Germany's treatment of her stolen property became a worse offence than the theft itself.

Several months before the conclusion of the war, the last steps had been taken in the process of German unity. The armies of the south-western states had fought side by side with the North Germans in the great victories of August and September, the Bavarian army being commanded by the Prussian Crown Prince, and it only remained to negotiate the terms of the inevitable union. Bismarck was entirely free from any pedantic attachment to constitutional symmetry, and he was perfectly ready to allow Bavaria considerably more " Home-rule " than any of the northern states possessed, and here, of course, he had to fight both the thorough-going Prussianisers, and also the Liberals, who saw in any extension of local privileges a departure from the ideals of 1848. But, as Bismarck said, " I was more anxious that these people should go away satisfied. What is the use of treaties that men are forced to sign ? "—a wise question, indeed ; if he could have seen its application to France as well as to Bavaria he would have been a statesman indeed. But the French, he held, were incorrigible, and generosity would be wasted on them. Oddly enough, that is exactly the view the French hold regarding the Germans.

So Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg entered into treaty

with the North German Federation upon virtually their own terms. And now it only remained to add a crown to the edifice, and to revive for the King of Prussia, who was also super-king of Germany, the ancient title of the Caesars. The proposal had to come from the kings and princes themselves, not from the *Reichstag*, or the old King of Prussia, who felt an almost childish dislike for his promotion, might refuse the honour outright. So Bismarck drafted a letter for the King of Bavaria, who copied it out, signed it, and despatched it to the King of Prussia, requesting him therein to assume the Imperial title. The ceremony was performed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in January 1871, a few days before the fall of Paris. If, as the historian Ranke declared, the war was a war, not against Napoleon III., but against Louis XIV., then the choice of that monarch's monstrous palace as the scene of the ceremony had a quite peculiar appropriateness.

(vi) THE GERMAN EMPIRE UNDER BISMARCK (1871-1888)

Three great statesmen in the middle years of the nineteenth century, Cavour, Lincoln, and Bismarck, founded or re-founded the political institutions of great nations. Of these three, Cavour died directly after his work was completed ; Lincoln was killed before he had had time to grapple with the second half of his great task—the reconciliation of the defeated South,—and America to this day has not recovered from the injury inflicted upon her by the most tragic and disastrous assassination of modern history ; Bismarck, alone of the three, survived long years to enjoy his triumph, and to guide the policy of the empire he had created. The good fortune was singular, for the prolongation of Bismarck's rule depended upon another life besides his own. The Emperor was already seventy-four at the time of the Treaty of Frankfort, and it was generally assumed that his son would

prefer other advice to that of Bismarck. Yet he lived till within a few days of his ninety-first birthday (1888), and so long as he reigned, Bismarck ruled. In 1877, Bismarck, momentarily overcome by bad health and the perversity of things political, sent in his resignation, but it was returned endorsed with the single word, "Never." It was not till 1890 that the pilot was somewhat unceremoniously dropped by the old captain's grandson, and the ship's tiller taken over by an equally self-confident but not equally skilful navigator.

During the seventeen years between the Treaty of Frankfort and the death of the old Emperor, the biography of Bismarck embraces a large part of the history of all Europe. It was a period of peace in the technical sense, but by no means a period of tranquillity. Here we can do no more than give the barest outline of the general characteristics of Bismarck's work as Imperial Chancellor, first in the purely German sphere, and afterwards in the sphere of foreign policy.

A great deal of Bismarck's energy during the first decade of the Empire was wasted in a curious struggle with the Roman Catholics, known as the *Kulturkampf*.[1] The religious prestige of the Papacy had been considerably heightened by the misfortunes which had befallen it as a ruler of temporal dominions in Italy, and in 1870, just when Rome itself was about to pass into the kingdom of Italy and the Pope to become "the prisoner of the Vatican," the Vatican Council laid down the dogma of "Papal Infallibility." Bismarck had various reasons for disliking and distrusting an active Catholicism. It was the religion of the Poles and of the Alsatians; the hostile element in south-west Germany was the strong Catholic element; it was, again, the Catholic party in France that had taken the lead in driving Napoleon

[1] *Kampf* means "struggle"; but *Kultur* is well-nigh untranslatable. It means more than "culture," more than "education," but less than "civilisation."

into the Franco-German War. Bismarck once said that he always distrusted politicians in skirts, whether feminine [1] or ecclesiastic; he might have added, with truth, that he found them more stubborn adversaries than most of the trousered variety, for they had not the logic to know when, by all the rules of the game, they were beaten.

A small but distinguished body of German Catholics had refused to accept the "Infallibility" decree, and the Catholic bishops asked the government to remove all priests and religious preachers who joined this body, from the state schools and universities. The government refused; the Church then excommunicated them. Here was the old issue of Church against State, Rome against Germany, in a new form, and Bismarck embarked on a policy of ill-advised persecution, with the object of showing that the Middle Ages were over and the State unquestionable master of its citizens. The notorious "May Laws" of the Prussian Parliament of 1873 excluded from a cure of souls anyone who was not a German, and had not been educated in the state schools and universities; they also deprived Catholic clergy of the right of inspecting elementary schools. Bishops and priests resisted and were imprisoned, and at one time nearly half the Catholic parishes in Prussia were deprived of their priests. These parishes lay mainly in the Polish districts and in Westphalia. The *Kulturkampf* was mainly a Prussian, rather than a German, venture, though certain measures, applying to all Germany, were also carried in the Imperial *Reichstag*.

Bismarck declared in one of his speeches that he would not "go to Canossa." [2] In the end he had to go, but his reception was so far from Hildebrandine that some maintain he never went at all. Bismarck, in fact, saw that he was beaten; he also wanted the support of the Catholic "Centre"

[1] The reference here is particularly to the wives of the Emperor and the Crown Prince, both of whom frequently opposed Bismarck's policy.

[2] See p. 111.

party to enable him to defeat the Liberals on a question relating to the army; further, he saw that there was an enemy in the field more formidable than the Catholics, namely the Socialists, and that it would be impossible to conduct the political warfare on both fronts at once. Pio Nono ended his long and eventful pontificate in 1878, the first Pope to commit the impropriety of reigning for more than the quarter-century allotted by tradition to St. Peter, and the election of a new Pope, Leo XIII., afforded both parties to the quarrel the opportunity for turning over a new leaf. The May Laws and other measures of the kind were abandoned, and Bismarck received the Order of Christ, being the first Protestant thus honoured; also a portrait of Leo XIII., and a copy of his Latin poems. But a little more, and one feels that Bismarck, like that other great foe of German Catholics, Richelieu, might have become a Cardinal.

The struggle with the Socialists fills the second, as the struggle with the Catholics fills the first, decade of the Empire. It was conducted in part by the same methods of repression, and, in so far as its object was to beat socialism to its knees, it was equally unsuccessful. Bismarck, however, fought the enemy on other and supplementary lines, and conceived the design of curing socialism by homœopathy.

The principle of collectivism or state-socialism, in accordance with which the state uses taxpayers' money to redress economic inequalities by providing various necessities of the needy, was an old tradition in Prussia, dating from at least as early as Frederick the Great, whose Code asserted that "it is the duty of the state to provide sustenance and support for those of its citizens who cannot procure sustenance for themselves." Bismarck proposed to apply this principle in detail, and to create a fund for the support of all workmen incapacitated by sickness, accident, or old age. The revenue required for this purpose was to be drawn from a state monopoly of tobacco. Tobacco was, as he pointed out, more largely consumed and more lightly taxed in Germany

than in any other European country. The scheme for a tobacco monopoly was defeated, and Bismarck was driven to adopt a plan involving workmen's and employers' contributions in the case of Sickness Insurance, employers' contributions (covering the whole cost) in the case of Accident Insurance, and workmen's contributions in the case of Old Age pensions. All these institutions became law between 1884 and 1890, and have since been copied, with various differences, in Great Britain and elsewhere.

The Liberals viewed with alarm and dislike this immense extension of the sphere of the State. "With compulsory attendance at the state schools; with the state universities as the only entrance to public life and professions; when every one had to serve for three years in the army; when so large a proportion of the population earned their livelihood in the state railways, the post office, the customs, the administration;" [1]—was not this already enough or too much? And now every workman would be an investor in state insurance, and look forward to becoming a state pensioner. And while the Liberals were hostile, the Socialists refused to be conciliated. They anticipated the arguments used by Mr. Belloc in his writings on "The Servile State." Pseudo-socialistic measures enforced by a capitalist government they treated as plain bribery and corruption of the working man. They complained, with considerable force, that the government, while carrying measures that undermined the independence of the workman, refused all those reforms, equally necessary for his economic well-being, which would have increased his independence also—regulation of wages, hours, and conditions of labour, and the protection of industrially employed women and children.

Bismarck, in fact, failed to exorcise the spirit of social democracy. The Social Democratic Party grew steadily during the quarter-century that intervened between his retirement and the outbreak of the Great War. In the

[1] Quoted from Headlam's *Bismarck*, p. 419.

election to the *Reichstag* held in the spring of 1914, the Social Democrats polled more votes, and won more seats, than they had ever done before, and the necessity for doing something to convince Germany that the Bismarckian tradition of government was still necessary to German salvation was not the least—possibly it was the greatest—of the causes of the wicked gamble into which Bismarck's successors threw themselves in the following July.

At the same time as Bismarck entered upon his course of collectivism through state insurance, he also entered upon what may be called the foreign policy of collectivism, namely, protection of home industries. Both policies are collectivist in that, by each, the state undertakes to control individualist economic activity in the interests of what is conceived as the national welfare; in the first case it controls distribution of income, in the second it controls the buying and selling of goods.[1] France and America had already repented of their tentative experiments towards the adoption of the English principle of free trade. Germany now followed in their footsteps, and passed in the course of these ten years from free trade to high tariffs. A most important element in the German protective system was the protection of agriculture, and it appealed strongly to Bismarck on sentimental as well as economic grounds. Though called to guide his country in an era of industrialism, he was always, by taste and preference, a man of the older world, a despiser of towns and all that they stood for. The protection of agriculture was, among other things, an economic alias for the preservation of the *Junker*.

In the course of seven years Bismarck had provoked and won three wars; henceforward, for the nineteen years during which he continued to rule Germany and dominate Europe,

[1] This is not, of course, to be taken to imply that the arguments in favour of one form of collectivism are the same as the arguments in favour of the other; or that a man who supports state insurance must logically support protective tariffs.

his aim was peace. Germany was now a nation satisfied, and the aim of her statecraft should not be to gain but to preserve. Therefore the potential enemies and robbers—every neighbour was a potential enemy and robber—must be watched with a sleepless eye. With some of the potential enemies one could strike bargains of alliance ; the rest one must bluff and bully ; one could neutralise their hostility, perhaps, by arranging matters in such a way that they quarrelled with each other. In this vast chess-game of foreign affairs Bismarck had a free hand. The *Reichstag*, obstinate and critical over questions of domestic policy, was powerless in foreign affairs, and showed, indeed, no desire for power. In the great struggle of the sixties Bismarck had convinced Germany once for all that foreign policy was safer in his hands than it could possibly be elsewhere. The only will he had to bend to his own was the Emperor's ; here indeed, the struggles of former years were renewed and repeated, but always with the same result in the end.

The one irreconcilable enemy was France, and the whole of Bismarck's policy was concerned with maintaining a European situation in which it would be impossible for France to challenge Germany with any hope of success. During the first years after the Franco-German War, the foundation of German policy was a friendly understanding with Russia and Austria. This *entente* of " the Three Emperors " was something more than a diplomatic convenience. It was defined by its authors as an alliance of the three great despotic monarchies against the rising tide of western democracy,—republicanism in France, and the new democratic franchise and Gladstonian liberalism in England. Bismarck always professed his anxiety that France should remain a republic and should not—as more than once seemed probable in the seventies and eighties—restore the Bourbons ; for he knew that a republican France would find it far more difficult than a French monarchy to secure that alliance with Russia which was Bismarck's perpetual nightmare.

France recovered, economically, from her defeat with amazing rapidity; but, after all, it is the length of a war rather than the decisiveness of its military events that cripples a nation, and the Franco-German War lasted only a little more than six months. In 1875 the French government took measures to increase the strength of their army, and rumours got abroad that Germany proposed to force another war upon France and "bleed her white." The story of the war scare of 1875 remains exceedingly obscure, as also Bismarck's part in it. There seems little doubt that the military chiefs in Berlin were seriously alarmed, and advocated war. Bismarck, in his *Reflections and Reminiscences*, says that he would rather have resigned than have accepted such a policy, and points to the diplomatic ignorance of the soldiers in supposing that such a war could have been carried through without European intervention. But Bismarck had none of George Washington's inability for falsehood, and it may be that he took occasion in his memoirs to dissociate himself from a project that had been discredited by failure. For the war-cloud rolled rapidly away when emphatic letters from the Czar and from Queen Victoria showed that England and Russia, though agreed on nothing else, were agreed upon a policy of "Hands off France." For a brief prophetic moment, the diplomatic grouping of 1914 dominated the situation.

Meanwhile the insurrections of the Serbs and Bulgars under Turkish rule were threatening to provide Europe with another variation on the theme of the Crimean War. It is impossible to relate here the complicated story of the Balkan crisis of 1875-1878: how England under pro-Turkish Disraeli prevented joint European action in coercion of Turkey, how the Czar was then forced by the "Pan-Slavic" enthusiasm of his people to declare war on Turkey in defence of the Bulgarians, and how, when the Russian armies reached the Sea of Marmara, they were confronted with the British fleet. To Bismarck this intrusion of the

Balkan question was exceedingly inconvenient, for it inevitably broke down the alliance of the Three Emperors, Austria being the chief rival of Russia as a claimant for the spoils of the Turk. If war had broken out between England and Russia, Austria would have joined England. Bismarck therefore worked steadily for peace, and secured the reference of the questions involved to a congress at Berlin (1878). Times had wonderfully changed since the last congress on Balkan questions, that of Paris in 1856, at which Prussia had played the part of " the poor relation." Bismarck was now unquestionably " President of Europe."

The Treaty of Berlin, while drastically curtailing the claims of Russia on behalf of Bulgaria, secured for Austria a Protectorate over the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bismarck, in fact, had to choose between his two allies, and he chose Austria. In the next year the Dual Alliance was signed. By this treaty Austria and Germany bound themselves each to support the other if attacked by Russia, and Austria undertook to remain neutral, if Germany were attacked by France. From this alliance one must date the beginnings of German interest in the Eastern question. Austria, expelled from Germany, and dominated by Hungarian rather than German interests, was turning south-eastwards. Germany would encourage this interest, sympathise with the Austrian ambition to " push through " to Salonica, and at the same time cultivate for herself England's old position of protector of Turkey against Russia.

But why did Bismarck, forced to choose between his former allies, choose Austria, the weaker, instead of Russia ? Several answers may be given. In the first place, Austria could be dominated and made a " junior partner," whereas Russia could not. Secondly, an Austrian alliance would have the goodwill of England as surely as a Russian alliance would forfeit that goodwill, and drive England into the arms of France. Lastly, could not the goodwill of Russia be, after all, recovered ? The Russian government was

terrorised by revolutionary Nihilists. In 1881 one of them murdered the Czar, Alexander II. His successor was not unnaturally attracted by Bismarck's favourite method of advertising his wares—alliance with Germany featuring as a system of mutual insurance against the "Revolution,"—in fact, the old "Holy Alliance" of the Czar Alexander I., the conqueror of Napoleon, in a new guise. In 1884 Russia was threatened by a serious quarrel with England over the frontier of Afghanistan (see p. 398), and Bismarck was able, without forfeiting his alliance with Austria, to negotiate a secret alliance with Russia in what was called the Reinsurance Treaty. This was followed by a compact between the three Emperors, arranging that if one of them made war upon a fourth power, the other two would observe a friendly neutrality, and that, as regarded difficulties in the Balkans, any dispute between two of the parties was to be settled by the casting vote of the third, which would presumably be Germany. This arrangement appears to have lasted until the fall of Bismarck in 1890. It was only after his fall that the treaty with Russia was allowed to lapse, and Russia was at last secured as an ally by France.

We must return to 1878, the date of the Congress of Berlin. It was assumed to be impossible to conciliate France; the intervention of Russia and England in 1875 had proved that it was impossible to suppress her. Might it not be possible to divert her ambitions into new channels, where fresh conquests might make the loss of Alsace and Lorraine a less bitter memory? France had held Algeria since 1830; at the Congress of Berlin she was given to understand that England and Germany would view in a friendly light her annexation of Tunis. So in 1881 France occupied Tunis. Thereby Bismarck killed two birds with one diplomatic stone. Italy had also hankered after Tunis, and now became painfully aware of her weakness and isolation. The only possible ally was Germany, and Germany was the ally of Italy's old enemy, Austria. There

were still certain territories in Austria's hands, "Italy unredeemed," which were needed to complete the ideal Italian kingdom, but so long as Austria was backed by Germany, their acquisition was impossible. So Italy abandoned hopes that were in any case hopeless, and in 1882 joined the Dual, henceforth the Triple, Alliance. One more possible ally was lost to France.

There remained England. In 1877 England and France had organised a joint control over the bankrupt finances of Egypt in the interests of English and French holders of Egyptian bonds (see p. 391). In 1881 the military and nationalist rebellion under Arabi Pasha had forced the two governments into threatening military measures against the insurgents. Then the French imperialist Prime Minister, Gambetta, fell from power, and France withdrew from Egypt, leaving England to go on alone to victory and occupation. It was a bitter moment for France. She withdrew because she feared that, if she plunged too deeply in Egypt, she might expose an ill-defended frontier to another German invasion. But ever since the days of the first Napoleon, still more since the cutting of the Suez Canal, Frenchmen had regarded Egypt in an almost proprietary light, and they were slow to forgive England the result of their own timidity. For the next twenty years the relations of England and France were continuously unfriendly. Thus the isolation of France within Europe was complete.

But English, French and Italians were not the only peoples bitten with a desire for African soil. Many Germans felt humiliated by the fact that the greatest of European powers possessed not an acre of ground outside Europe, and colonial imperialism arose as a new movement in Germany. Bismarck was uninterested. Unlike the first Napoleon, he was not "bored" by "this old Europe"; in fact, he found it all-sufficient. Colonialism was, to Bismarck, mere jingoism. He compared the German ambition for colonies with the ambition of the impoverished Polish nobleman to buy a fur

coat when he could not afford to keep himself in shirts. Moreover an aggressive colonial policy would require a fleet ; it would involve rivalry with England ; it would bring the English out of their " splendid " and, to Germany, very convenient, " isolation," and would drive them into building up against Germany a European coalition, such as those with which they had destroyed the power of Louis XIV. and of Napoleon. In fact, behind the colonial demand Bismarck saw the threat of 1914. But the Imperialists were not to be denied, any more than the Socialists, and Bismarck reluctantly set himself to afford them a minimum satisfaction at a minimum risk. Negotiations were opened with England ; the partition of Africa was taken in hand, and between 1884 and 1890 Germany secured Togoland, the Cameroons, German South-West, and German East, Africa ; and in the Pacific a third of New Guinea and a share of the Samoa group. Here again England's Egyptian undertakings furnished Bismarck with a useful diplomatic card ; England was almost as friendless in Europe as France, and it was easy for Germany to threaten steps that would have made our position in Egypt even more embarrassing than it already was. But Bismarck never had his heart in the colonial policy ; he had survived his own generation and saw himself becoming the instrument of the policies of its successor.

On the whole, Bismarck had been amazingly successful in his dealings with the governments of the foreign nations around him. He was much less successful in dealing with the small foreign populations that had the misfortune to live under German rule. He must have hoped, in the early years, to conciliate Alsace-Lorraine to its new masters, but he failed completely and the attempt was abandoned. The *Reichsland* (or " Imperial territory "), as it was called, remained a prisoner, with German garrisons for gaolers, and its fifteen representatives in the *Reichstag* were, like the Irish Nationalists in the English Parliament, an element of permanent opposition. Needless to say, they produced no

Parnell. The Polish provinces provided a more anxious problem since they lay so much nearer to Berlin. An edict of 1885 expelled all Poles who were not Prussian subjects, to the number of 34,000, from German territory, and in 1886 the government spent five million pounds on expropriating Polish landowners and leasing their farms to Germans, who were bound by contract to marry German wives. It was a modern version of Cromwell's treatment of Ireland, carried out at a time when England was laboriously undertaking to right the Cromwellian wrong, and to restore to the Irish their long-lost property in the soil of their country. The measure was a complete failure. The Polish population increased faster than the German, and bought out the German settlers faster than the government introduced them.

(vii) DROPPING THE PILOT: CONCLUSION (1888-1898)

In March 1888 the old Emperor died, and thus ended one of the most remarkable partnerships in history. When it began, the master was sixty-five, and the servant forty-seven; when it ended, the master was close on ninety-one and the servant close on seventy-three. When it began, the king had almost resolved to abdicate from a throne which had brought him nothing but humiliation, and the minister was the laughing-stock of the wise men of Europe. When it ended the German Emperor was recognised as the greatest sovereign of the Continent and his Chancellor as the greatest European statesman of the century. Bismarck's own words, unmistakably sincere as they are, may stand as an epitaph on the long partnership. "It is a peculiarity," he writes, "of royalist feeling that anyone who is moved by it does not cease to feel himself the servant of the monarch, even when he is conscious that he influences the monarch's decisions. One day, in 1865, the King spoke to his wife with admiration

of my skill in guessing his intentions, and, as he added after a pause, in directing them. In acknowledging this he did not lose the feeling that he was the master and I the servant, —a useful but respectful and devoted servant. . . . He had the true kingly feeling; not only was the possession of a powerful servant not disagreeable to him, but the thought of it was to him an elevating one. . . . Never for a moment did the thought of jealousy towards his servant come into his mind, and never for a moment did the royal consciousness that he was the master leave him, just as with me all the homage that was paid to me, exaggerated though it were, never affected my feeling that I was the servant of my master, and was so gladly."

The Crown Prince, who ascended the throne as Frederick I., was already stricken with cancer, and died in the course of the year; and the crown passed to his son, William II.

There had been a time when Bismarck had assumed that his tenure of power would end with his old master's death, but during recent years such an idea had faded into the background. His son, Count Herbert Bismarck, had been industriously trained as his understudy; why should he not succeed him? Why should not a dynasty of Bismarcks establish themselves as hereditary directors of the dynasty of Hohenzollerns? Change of ministry was obviously unsuitable during the brief reign of the stricken Frederick, and the effusive devotion of William II. so confirmed Bismarck in his hopes that, a year after William's accession, he told the Czar that he was "absolutely certain of remaining in office for life." Yet five months later he had fallen.

The fact is that the new Emperor, bursting with energy and ideas, required a breathing space to find his feet and realise his authority; once his apprenticeship to his high office was, in his own judgment, completed, the presence of a Bismarck was as intolerable to him as the presence of a Richelieu would have been to Louis XIV. Bismarck must

go. It is unnecessary to investigate the occasions of a quarrel that was in any case inevitable. The new Kaiser had his own ideas about the Russian alliance, which he considered superfluous; he had his own ideas about the treatment of the Socialists. Bismarck found that the Emperor was taking counsel with Prussian ministers behind his back, and he reminded him of the rule that all communications with subordinate ministers must be made through the Minister-President of Prussia. The Emperor demanded the abrogation of this rule; Bismarck refused, and was driven to resign. Just two years had passed since the death of William I.

The last eight years of Bismarck's life form a dismal and unedifying epilogue. The old man had been so long in power that he had lost all taste for life without it; retirement was for him a veritable St. Helena. But it was a St. Helena easily accessible to friends and flatterers and newspaper correspondents, and these he entertained with the ruminations of his discontent. Friedrichsruhe, his favourite country-house, became a centre of opposition to Potsdam. Nothing that the new government could do was right in Bismarck's eyes, and in condemning the new Emperor he frankly condemned his own handiwork. Hereditary despotism was perhaps a mistake after all; the only hope for Germany was to strengthen the *Reichstag*, and develop ministerial responsibility. "Our task," he said, "can only be completed when Germany possesses a powerful parliament which embodies our sense of unity;" and again, speaking to Gladstone's old colleague, Sir Charles Dilke: "People look on me as a monarchist. Were it all to come over again, I would be a republican and a democrat; the rule of kings is the rule of woman; the bad women are bad, and the good ones are worse."

He died in July 1898, and was buried without any official pomps and ceremonies, in the soil of his own estate.

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It would be unreasonable to conclude a sketch of Bismarck's career without attempting to draw from it an answer to the inevitable question: How far was the career and policy of Bismarck responsible for those later developments of "Prussianism" which made Germany intolerable to the world, and caused the Great War?

Along one line of argument it would, no doubt, be possible to exonerate Bismarck entirely from the charge implied. If we could imagine a Bismarck endowed with patriarchal longevity, and a William II. endowed with the prudence, modesty, and self-effacement of his grandfather; if, that is to say, we imagine a prolongation of Bismarck's ministry down to the present day, one may fairly safely say that, under those conditions, the Great War would never have befallen. Bismarck would presumably have avoided the long series of clumsy provocations whereby William II. created the Triple Entente and provoked it to battle.

But great statesmen cannot assume their own immortality, nor have they the right to assume successors who will be their own equals. We have to ask what kind of inheritance Bismarck left to his successor. As Mr. Grant Robertson very sensibly remarks:[1] "It is not always the heirs to a great legacy who mismanage the property. More frequently than is commonly supposed or admitted, the nature of the property, the methods by which it has been acquired, and the principles on which it has been administered prior to the change of ownership, impose obligations and involve efforts without which the inheritance itself must fall to pieces."

In his German constitution Bismarck had established a democratically elected assembly in strict subordination to a despotic and "divine" monarchy. He had assumed that democracy, unlike the middle-class liberalism, would be dazzled by the "shining armour" of the monarch. But he reckoned without socialism, and he was mistaken. As time passed, and the glories of '66 and '70 faded from popular

[1] Robertson, *Bismarck*, p. 483.

memory, the shining armour grew tarnished with disuse, and failed to dazzle a growing percentage of the German population. Bismarck, in fact, in defeating the Prussian parliament of the sixties, and founding his whole system on that defeat, had won a decisive engagement, but it was an engagement in a very long campaign, and the final result of that campaign was hardly doubtful. All the natural forces of civilisation were making for self-government and against hereditary despotism, and the Germans, as one of the most intelligent of peoples, would not withstand those natural forces for ever. It is true that the governing class, through their docile university professors and schoolmasters, achieved an extraordinary degree of success in the task of indoctrinating the German people with their gospel of despotism and militarism. But foreign opinion has overrated the completeness of their success. The steady increase of the Social Democratic vote proves, in fact, that, some time before the war, their success had reached its zenith and had entered on its decline.

In transferring the old Prussian despotism, thinly disguised, to the new German Empire, Bismarck had set up an anachronism. This anachronism could only maintain itself by proving the necessity of its existence, and the only convincing proof was Bismarck's proof,—war and victory. No doubt war, for the Prussian monarchy of 1914, was a gamble—" world-power or downfall." But " no war " was not a gamble ; it was downfall to a certainty. Sooner or later, the Hohenzollerns were bound to go the way of the English Stuarts, unless they could prove their title by the sword.

And if the domestic situation doomed the unfortunate William II. to war, so also did the foreign situation. Bismarck's foreign policy was a superb performance, but its groundwork was pessimism and despair.[1] He was the

[1] In what follows I am much indebted to a very able article which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* of August 3, 1922, under the title " Real Politik."

complete Machiavellian. He assumed that nations were, by a law of nature, rivals and enemies, and must always remain so ; that their proper weapons were fraud and force ; and that all alliances were of the nature of conspiracies against whatever nations were not members of the alliance. He refused to conceive of Europe or of the world except as a potential battlefield. Peace was to be maintained, not because it was a good thing in itself, but because, after three victorious wars, it was Germany's interest. For example, with reference to certain diplomatic documents, he writes on an occasion that need not be specified : " Both documents culminate in an endeavour to represent Europe as a single power, as a kind of federal state, in the interests of which Russia is prepared to sacrifice her support. . . . I consider it to be our immediate and inevitable duty to oppose this untenable fiction, which is most detrimental to us."

Bismarck paid England the compliment of recognising in her the special champion of this " fiction." He never tires, in his *Reflections and Reminiscences*, of pouring scorn on " English cant about humanity and civilisation." No doubt, such catch-words, on English as on other lips, have often been no better than hypocrisy, or that unconscious hypocrisy which arises from self-deception. It is easy for a nation of successful imperialists to talk about " the White Man's burden," and to persuade themselves that the world's interests coincide with their own. None the less, this typically English impulse to prove that English foreign and imperial policy is on the side of the angels, is a healthy impulse, for it masks a repudiation of Machiavelli, and a recognition of a morality overriding politics.

There are those who think they can disprove what, with Bismarck's authority, we may call this English doctrine, by the method of *reductio ad absurdum*. Followed to its logical conclusion, they say, this doctrine of morality in politics would demand that a nation should sacrifice its very existence for the sake of its neighbours. But since morality

does not demand that much of an individual, why should it be assumed that morality demands it of a nation? "Ultimately,[1] what we expect, and may reasonably expect, from a state is not essentially different from what we expect from a private individual. The difference between private and public morality is generally overstated. What do we expect from the private individual? Not that he will sacrifice his own fortune and comfort and that of his family for philanthropic objects, however excellent; rather that he should not consciously build up his own fortune on the ruin of others, and that he shall use a reasonable part of his own leisure, and any superfluity of wealth that he enjoys, for the furtherance of public and general welfare. Is not this what we may reasonably demand from a state or nation? No country is called upon to sacrifice essential interests or permanently to compromise its own future security for the sake of some distant and alien people. . . . But in England we expect, and justly expect, that in any matters in which vital interests are not concerned, the country shall use its power and influence in the furtherance of the general good of the world. We may reasonably expect that it will, when an occasion arises, freely sacrifice some minor advantage, if that is of great importance to some other country, and that it shall do so without any specific and definite promise of reciprocity."

Such a view Bismarck and his school would dismiss as cant and folly. "I conceive of life after the war as a continual conflict, whether it be war or peace. I believe it was Bernhardi who said that politics is war conducted by other weapons. We can invert this aphorism, and say that peace is war conducted by other weapons." These are the words of one of Bismarck's most eminent pupils, M. Clemençeau. Bismarck's "bloody instructions" have, like those of Macbeth, "returned to plague the inventor." The German Empire he created has been laid in the dust. But

[1] Quoted from *The Times* article already mentioned.

the more difficult task of overthrowing the empire he has established in the minds of politicians, and more particularly in the minds of the political leaders of the people that most execrate his name, is as yet unaccomplished.

NOTE ON THE EMS TELEGRAM

Bismarck's version for publication of the king's telegram from Ems has often been described as a forgery. It was nothing of the kind. The king's telegram had in any case to be rewritten, as it was not intended for, or expressed in a form suited to, publication. But, it is said, the published version, while true to the facts, differed in spirit and tone from its original. Mr. Grant Robertson calls it " a brutalised and provocative message, true to the bare facts, but so worded as to convey a wholly different construction." A careful examination of the two texts, which Mr. Grant Robertson prints in an appendix, entirely disproves this statement. The published version is similar in tone to the telegram ; indeed, it may be said that the most provocative words in the telegram have been omitted.

Oddly enough, Bismarck is himself responsible for the reproaches that have been heaped on him in this matter. In his own memoirs he asserts that his " editing " of the telegram was an all-important factor in producing the war fever in both countries. The story he tells (*Reflections and Reminiscences*, vol. ii. pp. 95-101) is, briefly, as follows. Bismarck, Moltke and Roon were dining together, feeling thoroughly depressed by the news of Prince Leopold's withdrawal of his candidature. Bismarck received the telegram from Ems, and read it to his companions, who became more depressed than ever. *After repeated examination of the document* (italics mine), Bismarck saw its value

as an agent for provoking war. He apparently said nothing on this point to Moltke and Roon, but made enquiries as to the state of the army. When reassured on this point, he composed his version for the press and read it to his companions. Moltke at once remarked, " It has now a different ring ; it sounded before like a parley ; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge." In fact, both generals completely recovered their spirits.

Dr. Rose, basing his case on the fact that the press version is a perfectly fair *précis*, and in no way more " provocative " than the original telegram, assumes that Bismarck's story, as told above, is simply untrue, and is " the offspring of senile vanity." In fact he shifts the charge of forgery from the telegram to the *Reminiscences*. But this does not seem plausible. Bismarck's story of the dinner-party does not read like an invention, and, in fact, for such an invention no adequate motive can be suggested.

The present writer would suggest, with all diffidence, the following explanation. When Bismarck first read the telegram he read it in a tone of despondency, and this tone of despondency deepened the gloom of his friends. When, later, he read the version for the press, his own outlook had entirely changed, and the change of outlook expressed itself in a change of tone and delivery. The two military men were struck by the change, and attributed to the wording of the version what was really a change in the delivery and manner of the reader, and Bismarck himself accepted the error of his friends and assumed that his version had mysterious virtues (or vices) of its own. This may sound over subtle and far-fetched ; but how else can the undeniable facts be explained ?

IX

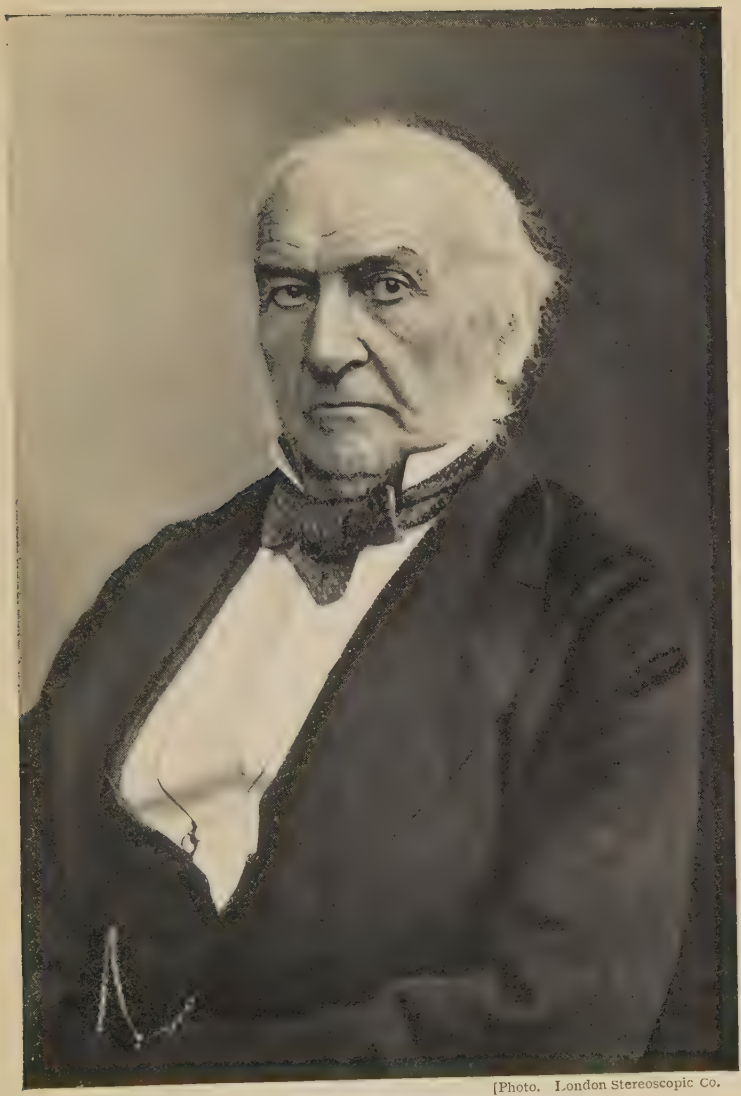
WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE (1809-1898)

(i) GLADSTONE AND PEEL (1809-1846)

The enormously long and miscellaneous career of Gladstone differs in an important respect from all the other careers that have been reviewed in this book. Each of the eight statesmen already studied is associated with a single great problem of constructive statesmanship ; the biography of the man resolves itself into the history of the solution, or attempted solution, of a single, even though a complex, political problem : Pericles and the character of the Athenian Empire ; Julius Caesar and the transformation of the Roman Republic ; Charlemagne and the resurrection of the Roman Imperial Idea ; Innocent III. and the climax of papal control ; Richelieu and the creation of Bourbon despotism ; Washington and the foundation of the United States ; Napoleon and the organisation of the French Revolution militant ; Bismarck and the establishment of the German Empire. In each case the Man and the Thing are indissolubly connected ; the career is a unity ; the man seems dedicated to a single great task from start to finish. But where shall we find unity in the career of Gladstone ? He began as a Tory and ended a Liberal ; he began by denying almost every principle he afterwards upheld, and by opposing almost every cause of which he was afterwards the most powerful champion. Some think that his greatest

work was done as a finance minister in the fifties and sixties ; others point to the impressive series of domestic reforms in the early seventies ; others find him greatest in his championship of Home Rule for Ireland in the eighties and nineties. Some again find that his greatness lay not so much in anything that he did, as in what he was, a great Christian steadfastly applying to the recalcitrant material of politics the high principles of his Faith. Others do not find him great at all, but, in the words of Disraeli, " a sophistical rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity," a drifter upon the stream of change, who knew not what port he was making for, and withal something of a hypocrite.

Some of the peculiarities of Gladstone's career were due to its amazing length. He was elected a member of the House of Commons in 1832, the year of the Great Reform Bill, and he made his last speech within its walls in 1894,—sixty-two years, a period as long or longer than the whole span from the cradle to the grave of Pericles, Julius Caesar, Innocent III., Richelieu and Napoleon. He was the cabinet colleague of Peel in the forties and of Mr. Asquith in the nineties. In boyhood he had listened to the eloquence of Canning, who had once been the cabinet colleague of the younger Pitt ; in his latest years he listened to the eloquence of Mr. Lloyd George. But the more fundamental cause of the rambling and miscellaneous character of Gladstone's career is to be found in the character of Victorian England. For it was the destiny of Victorian England to move forward with unprecedented rapidity, yet to encounter no fundamental crisis. Revolution, which visited France, Germany, Italy, America and Japan, avoided our shores. Evolution on an unprecedented scale provided a substitute and an antidote, political evolution of the kind summarised under the name of Liberalism. The forces of Liberalism first liberalised Gladstone's own mind, and then, as a result, set him at the head of the Liberal movement in English



[Photo. London Stereoscopic Co.

GLADSTONE

politics. He is thus, in politics, the typical statesman of Victorian England. The England that went to war in 1914 with the Prussia of Bismarck was, very largely, the England of Gladstone.

Gladstone was born on one of the last days of the year 1809.[1] His parents were both of them Scots, the father a Lowlander and the mother a Highlander by descent. But, like many shrewd money-making Scots, the father Gladstone had acted upon the hint conveyed in Dr. Johnson's remark to Boswell, that the " most beautiful object " in Scotland is the road to England. The family were established in Liverpool, where the father was a wealthy East and West Indian merchant, and an owner of West Indian slaves. The Slave Trade had been condemned by Act of Parliament two years before Gladstone was born, and the Anti-Slavery Society was now pressing onward towards the emancipation of all slaves within the British Empire, a triumph secured in Gladstone's first parliamentary session. Gladstone the elder was a vigorous controversialist in the slave-holder's interest, and a man of strongly expressed views on economic questions in general, and Gladstone the younger's first contribution to the press was a series of letters in 1826 in the *Liverpool Courier*, defending his father over the signature " A Friend of Fair Dealing." [2]

Gladstone was educated at Eton under Dr. Keate, one of the last of the great line of headmasters who relied upon the rod as the main instrument of education. In the very month in which Gladstone left Eton, Dr. Arnold was elected

[1] Gladstone's age at the various stages of his career should be borne in mind ; it can, of course, always be found by subtracting ten from the last two figures of the date. It has often been pointed out that 1809 was unusually prolific in births of great men : Gladstone, Lincoln, Darwin, Tennyson, Mendelssohn. Needless to say, Gladstone outlived all the others.

[2] Gladstone's last contribution to the press was made in 1898 (*Daily Telegraph*, January 5), seventy-two years later. This presumably constitutes a record.

headmaster of Rugby, where he proceeded to set a different fashion, and withdrew Keate's favourite weapon from the front line to the reserves. While at Eton, Gladstone developed the habit of wide miscellaneous reading which never forsook him even in the most strenuous periods of his career; but wide and disinterested study was much commoner among the public schoolboys of the past than it is in the over-organised public schools of to-day. From Eton he passed to Christ Church, Oxford, where he secured a "double first" in Classics and Mathematics. He was also a star of the first magnitude in the debates of the Oxford Union Society, then in the vigour of its youth. In fact, the Union proved to be his stepping-stone from Oxford to Westminster. In May 1831 Gladstone spoke for three-quarters of an hour in support of a motion condemning the Reform Bill as calculated "to break up the whole frame of society." The speech made an impression that spread beyond the confines of Oxford, and a year later he received a message from the high Tory Duke of Newcastle, informing him that the Duke's influence in the little borough of Newark would be at his disposal, if he was intending to stand for parliament.

This unexpected and most flattering invitation decided Gladstone's choice of a career. That choice had long been in doubt. Gladstone had learnt at his mother's knee the pure, deep, and narrow religion of the Evangelicals, and Oxford friendships and Oxford sermons had reinforced this home influence. In his first year at Oxford he had expressed to his father, a determination to take Holy Orders; but the undergraduate's mind was already being drawn in another direction. To describe the problem as a choice between service of the Church and service of the State would be to misread the situation. Service of the Church was in any case the prime motive, and in a certain sense it continued the prime motive down to the end of Gladstone's life. The question was, could the Church be served best in Holy

Orders or in the House of Commons? He decided to serve it in the House of Commons, and a churchman, reviewing Gladstone's career at the end of the century, might well have held that his Church had gained by the choice. For there is good reason for thinking that an episcopal career would have cramped Gladstone's development, and consequently his religious usefulness, as markedly as the political career did, in fact, expand both, as will appear in the course of the narrative. Here it need only be said that motives which influenced him in 1832 were reiterated as his career advanced. In 1843, when he was already a Minister of the Crown, he wrote, "I contemplate secular affairs chiefly as a means of being useful in church affairs," and in 1846 he gave an explanation of this utterance. The present period, he held, was a period of transition in the relations between the Church and State. Until recent years, which had seen the emancipation of Roman Catholics and Dissenters, the State had been a church institution and the Church a state institution. Now they were parting company; the State was becoming non-religious, and the Church must consequently secure independence of the State. Once the delicate process of severing the ancient connection was accomplished, the service of the Church could best be performed "in the sanctuary, not in parliament." For the present, so long as Church questions were necessarily matters of constant parliamentary concern, the Church had need of servants in parliament. Such was Gladstone's general attitude in this matter.

To return to 1832. Having accepted the Duke's offer, Gladstone had to plunge into preparations for the general election that immediately followed the Reform Bill. It is commonly supposed that this great Bill abolished rotten boroughs; but the work of abolition was somewhat imperfectly carried through. One quarter of the sixteen hundred electors of Newark were the Duke's tenants, and in the stormy election of the previous year, when the fates of the

Reform Bill and of the House of Lords were at stake, the Duke had served a notice to quit on the more actively Whiggish of his tenants, and had defended his action with the plea that he had "a right to do as he liked with his own." Such was Gladstone's political godfather. However that may have been, the young candidate played his part gallantly; the effects of Oxonian eloquence were supplemented, behind the orator's back, by free drinks and other material items to the extent of £2000; and Gladstone was found to be at the head of the poll.

The other events of the thirties need not detain us long. The young member's first speech was, very appropriately, a defence of his father's administration of his slave property against the attacks of the abolitionists, who were now carrying their great bill, the first-fruits of the reformed House of Commons. The speech won the commendation of the leaders on both sides and also of no less a person than King William IV. A list of Gladstone's votes in his first session makes curious reading, considered as the record of the votes of a future Liberal leader. He voted in favour of coercion in Ireland, against the admission of Jews to Parliament or Dissenters to Oxford and Cambridge, against the abolition of naval and military sinecures, against the publication of the lists of voters in parliamentary divisions, and against the introduction of the ballot in elections. The only vote of importance he would have approved sixty years later was in favour of Ashley's first Factory Act; but the protection of women and children in factories was then reckoned not as Liberalism but as philanthropy.

In November 1834 King William took a step never since imitated by his successors, and, by the exercise of his own judgment, dismissed the Liberal government, and handed the seals of office to the Conservative leader, Sir Robert Peel; and Peel made Gladstone Under-Secretary for the Colonies. The King's judgment proved to be at fault and the Conservative government only lasted a few months, most of which

time was occupied by a general election, but the episode illustrates the rapid growth of Gladstone's reputation. It also illustrates his singular religious scruples, for it appears that, had the government lasted much longer, its youngest member would have resigned his office in protest against a scheme for subsidising from public funds the educational activities of various religious denominations working among the emancipated slaves of the West Indies;—a horrid encroachment upon the privileges of the Church of England, as understood by Gladstone at that date.

In 1838 Gladstone published, under the title of *The State in its Relation with the Church*, a book on the subject of his deepest meditations. The position of this book in Gladstone's career is a singular one, for it is, on its political side, a formulation of a point of view, not only wholly inapplicable to nineteenth century England, but also one about to be abandoned by its author. It is a statement of views at which the youth had arrived, and from which the man was about to depart. His principle is the fundamental union of Church and State, in the interests of both, but chiefly of the State. The Church might stand alone. "Her condition," he wrote, "would be anything rather than pitiable, should she once more occupy the position which she held before the reign of Constantine. But the State, in rejecting her, would actively violate its most solemn duty, and would entail upon itself a curse." In fact, the State, as its highest duty, must discriminate between religious truth and religious error, and, having found the truth and established it in the Church of England, must give to that Church its exclusive official support. The book made Gladstone at once the representative in political circles of the new "Oxford Movement," and proved a source of embarrassment, when he had outgrown the political ideas expressed in it.[1]

[1] It was in the opening sentences of a review of this book that Macaulay used the famous phrase describing Gladstone as "the rising hope of the stern unbending Tories."

In 1841 the Whig government, which had held office, with the brief interruption already described, since 1830, was defeated at the polls, and Peel became Prime Minister, with Gladstone at the Board of Trade. The four years that now began mark Gladstone's apprenticeship to the work of practical administration, and his introduction to the mysteries of finance, of which he became so brilliant an exponent. His political chief was a man under whom he could be proud to serve. Peel has the reputation of having been about the best Prime Minister in our history, so far as the organisation of ministerial business is concerned. He was also, like Gladstone, the son of a Lancashire business man and a prize scholar in his day, first at Harrow, and afterwards at Oxford. " Oxford on the surface, but Liverpool below "—a phrase coined to describe Gladstone—would serve equally well for his chief. Peel showed sound judgment in sending Gladstone to the Board of Trade. Gladstone himself was secretly mortified that his task was to govern " not men but packages," and his mortification shows that the sky-aspiring theologian had still got to learn that, though man cannot live, even politically, by bread alone, it is still more certain that he cannot live without it.

The life of a departmental chief is not very exciting, unless the ministry to which he belongs happens to be a quarrelsome one, and Peel's was, until after Gladstone left it, one of the least quarrelsome ministries of the nineteenth century. Gladstone learnt a great deal about trade ; he learnt his first lesson in Liberalism by discovering that he was at heart a Free Trader ; and he aided Peel in carrying through a reform of the tariff abolishing the export duty on coal and the import duty on four hundred and thirty protected articles. It is, perhaps, more amusing to remark that, as President of the Board of Trade, he was the recipient of one of the last sonnets of Wordsworth, a poet whom he admired more than any other of the moderns ; but the aged poet poured his complaint into deaf ears on this occasion, and the desecrating

railway was extended from Kendal to Windermere. If Wordsworth were alive to-day he would probably seek, on the quiet old-world railway, an escape from the motor-traffic on the Kendal and Windermere road.[1]

In 1845 the government proposed to increase the state grant to the Irish Catholic College of Maynooth, in contravention of the church-and-state principles with which Gladstone had identified himself. He felt it his duty to resign his post in the Cabinet, in order to prove beyond cavil that his own change of opinion on such questions, which he showed by supporting the Maynooth Bill in debate, had not been influenced by motives of personal ambition. The result of this act of subtle scrupulousness was to remove him from office just as the Cabinet was about to enter on the policy which wrecked the Conservative party for nearly thirty years, and started Gladstone on his long and dubious journey from the Conservative to the Liberal fold. We approach the repeal of the Corn Law.

During the Napoleonic War, agriculture, and, more particularly, the owners of agricultural land, had enjoyed a period of exceptional prosperity, owing to the abeyance of foreign competition, combined with the rapid growth of the population in the new centres of industry. When peace came, it seemed good to landowners, who dominated the unreformed House of Commons, to perpetuate this pleasing state of affairs by protective legislation excluding foreign corn except when the price of home corn rose above a certain figure. This Corn Law, enacted in the year of Waterloo, and since that date twice amended, was, in 1845, far the most important surviving relic of the protectionist

[1] The Sonnet is entitled "On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway" and begins:

> Is there no nook of English ground secure
> From rash assault? Schemes of retirement sown
> In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
> As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
> Must perish; how can they this blight endure?

system. It had become the bugbear, not merely of the poor, whose political power was not yet won, but of the manufacturers, who saw that dear corn involved high wages. In 1838 Cobden and Bright had formed the Anti-Corn-Law League, for purposes of political agitation up and down the country, but neither of the great parliamentary parties had as yet accepted their arguments. But in 1845 Peel was converted to the practical necessity of repeal by the occurrence of the Irish potato famine; for it was obviously indefensible to continue to raise by taxation the price of food against people who were dying by thousands from starvation. Peel failed, however, to convince his cabinet (from which Gladstone had withdrawn), and, as the Whig leader Russell now issued a public statement in favour of repeal, he resigned office in his favour. Russell failed to form a ministry, and Peel returned to office, shedding his protectionist colleagues and relying on the promised support of Russell and the Liberals to carry the repeal. Gladstone accepted membership of Peel's new government, and thereby, in accordance with law, vacated his seat at Newark, for which he refused to stand again, as his patron, the Duke of Newcastle, was, it need hardly be said, a staunch supporter of the Corn Law, and Gladstone's Toryism, as much as his sense of obligation to his old patron, forbade him to entertain the idea of standing as the anti-ducal candidate. As a result, during the whole of this brief six-months ministry (January to June 1846) Gladstone held office without a seat in parliament.

Peel carried his policy, and destroyed his party. The repeal was passed through parliament with the help of the Whigs, but two-thirds of the Conservatives voted against it, and took a speedy revenge by out-voting their old leader on a bill for the protection of life in Ireland. This crisis was the occasion of Disraeli's leap from notoriety to fame. Inspired both by a genuine dislike of the political dictation of the new manufacturing class, and also by a personal

hatred of Peel for refusing him office, he put himself at the head of the Tory "Die-hards," and gave a series of exhibitions of oratorical invective, at the expense of Peel, that recalled the best models of Cicero and Demosthenes. The Whigs returned to power, and Peel withdrew from public life, leaving his party irreconcilably divided between Peelites and Protectionists. Four years later he was killed by a fall from his horse. Gladstone had lost his leader and found his rival, and the first phase of his career was over.

(ii) THE PEELITES AND LORD PALMERSTON (1846-1865)

The parliamentary politics of the thirteen years that lie between the fall of Peel and the final junction of Gladstone with the Liberals under Lord Palmerston in 1859, are tiresomely complicated. Examined in detail they would establish a very strong case in favour of a plain two-party system. During these thirteen years the Peelites held the balance between Whigs and Tories, and ensured a series of weak governments. We have, first, a Whig ministry under Russell, overthrown in 1852 by a rival Whig leader, Russell's recently ejected colleague, Lord Palmerston; then a Tory ministry under Lord Derby (with Disraeli as leader in the Commons), which abandoned Protection without achieving reunion with the Peelites; then a Peelite-Whig coalition under the Peelite Aberdeen, which fell on evil days in the Crimean War, and gave place to a Whig government under Palmerston, which the Peelites joined and after one month abandoned, without, however, bringing down Palmerston's government, which lasted till 1858; then another weak Derby-Disraeli government, and finally, in 1859, a Palmerston government, within which the Peelites finally accepted membership of the Liberal party. Such is the shifting background.

In 1847 Gladstone was elected member of parliament for Oxford University, but his parliamentary duties occupied but

little of his energies during the next few years. Far more important than these for the development of his statesmanship was his visit to Italy.

Gladstone went to Naples with his family in the autumn of 1850 in search of a pleasant holiday; he found instead a political scandal of the first magnitude. The Italian revolutions of 1848 had been suppressed with the help of Austria, and the Neapolitan Bourbon government was engaged in the congenial task of punishing its political prisoners. Gladstone visited the law-courts, and heard brave and honourable men sentenced to atrocious punishments on the strength of transparently perjured evidence; he visited the prisons and saw these same men, or their companions, chained together in pairs, in filthy dungeons. Such was one at least of the governments whose restoration English Conservatism had applauded. He at once placed his services at the disposal of the men whom his political friends at home had denounced as incendiaries and anarchists. He would leave no stone unturned to right this flagrant wrong. On his return to London he went straight to Lord Aberdeen, the aged leader of the Peelites, and sought his co-operation. Aberdeen had played a part in making the treaties of Vienna, which restored the Bourbons to Naples after the fall of Napoleon, thirty-seven years before; he was no friend of revolutionaries nor of vehement courses. Gladstone consented to hold his hand, while Aberdeen made unofficial approaches to Schwartzenberg, the Austrian Chancellor. When these approaches had demonstrated their own futility, he considered himself unmuzzled, and published the first of his stirring appeals to the conscience of his fellow-countrymen in the form of a "Letter to Lord Aberdeen."

The Neapolitan prisoners were not released. None the less, a great blow had been struck. The foundations were laid of that strong friendship between the English and Italian peoples which helped to smooth the path of Cavour and Garibaldi nine years later. More than this, a new and

unfamiliar note had been sounded amidst the chatter of English party politics, a note of moral depth and resonance unheard since Burke. Gladstone, though as yet neither a Liberal nor a Nationalist, found himself the hero of all the Liberals and Nationalists of Europe; and the "stern unbending Tories" were confirmed in their worst suspicions about him.

In December 1852 the failure of the Derby-Disraeli government, following on the failure of the Whig government of Lord John Russell, involved the trial of a third experiment, the Peelite-Whig Coalition under Lord Aberdeen. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer and entered on his career as a maker of budgets which, if not his most exciting, is his least contested claim to greatness.[1] It is difficult to present this aspect of his statesmanship to the general reader who has a healthy disinclination to burden his mind with long rigmaroles of financial statistics. As Gladstone's biographer says, "If there is anything more repulsive than a living tax, it is a dead one." And for us who have the privilege of living after the Great War, repulsion will be coloured with contempt. It is hard for us, who have watched Chancellors budgeting for a thousand millions, to regard as more than Lilliputian the efforts of a bygone Chancellor to cope with a rise in annual expenditure from fifty-two millions to seventy.[2] Gladstone's greatness as a financier, we are given to understand, had two aspects: his skill in discovering financial expedients, and his skill in persuading his cabinet colleagues and the House of Commons to accept the expedients he had chosen. The difficulty of appreciating the first we have touched on; not less great is the difficulty of appreciating the second. Gladstone's budget speeches were, for those who listened to them, a source of well-nigh

[1] Gladstone was author of thirteen budgets, namely those of the years 1853, 1854, 1859-1866, 1880-1882.

[2] These were the figures of 1854 and 1870 respectively. Before the Great War the annual government expenditure had risen to nearly two hundred millions.

intoxicating intellectual satisfaction. But oratory is the most ephemeral of the arts, and dead speeches follow dead taxes to an unhonoured grave.

When Gladstone became Chancellor in 1853, a sound and enterprising financier was the foremost need of the country. The destruction of the old Protective system had overthrown accepted principles without establishing new ones. Confused finance had ruined first the Russell ministry and then the Derby ministry, and was reducing the commercial classes from exasperation to despair. Gladstone's central achievement was as important as it sounds simple; he secured for the Income Tax its present position as the main financial resource of the country. He did not know that he was doing this; as late as 1873 he contemplated its abolition; in fact, he dreaded the very efficiency of a tax whose easy expansion would encourage extravagance and military recklessness. None the less, the permanent Income Tax remains his great financial achievement, and its importance to England is easily measured to-day. Of all the European belligerents in the Great War, England alone, both during and after the war, levied adequate taxes on her richer citizens and secured their efficient collection; and why? Because England alone had accustomed her citizens to the honest and punctual payment of what is by far the most expensive of taxes.

The Income Tax was first introduced as an emergency war tax by Pitt in 1799, and dropped with the end of the war in 1815. Peel, in this as in so much else Gladstone's master, renewed it in 1842 to counterbalance the abolition of some hundred of import duties, but its life had been recognised as provisional and precarious. In his first budget (1853) Gladstone established it for seven years to come, at successive rates of sevenpence, sixpence and fivepence. In 1854 he raised it to the unprecedented figure of one and fourpence to meet the cost of the Crimean War, and laid down the sound doctrine that the cost of war should be met to the

uttermost farthing from taxes, before recourse was had to loans. In 1859, finding it at fivepence, he raised it to ninepence. In 1873, when he took over once again, as Prime Minister, his old office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, he contemplated, as already mentioned, its abolition. But his government fell before the time came to introduce a budget. Disraeli lowered it to twopence for the two following years, but since that day the danger of our losing the privilege of paying this excellent tax has become smaller and smaller.

A few more of Gladstone's contributions to finance may be mentioned here. He extended (1853) what are now called "death duties" from personal to landed property; he encouraged cleanliness by removing (1853) the tax on soap, and intelligence by removing (1860) the tax on paper, and thrift by the establishment (1862) of the Post Office Savings Banks. In connection with the third of these reforms, which was opposed in the House of Lords, he strengthened the financial supremacy of the Commons by combining for the first time all the taxation of the year in a single Finance Act (1861). In 1860 he was Cobden's chief supporter in negotiating the Commercial Treaty with France, whereby our exports to that country were in the next few years more than doubled. The treaty was regarded by its creators, with mistaken optimism, as a first step towards general European Free Trade; but it served another purpose besides its commercial one. In 1859 England had been within measurable distance of war with France, because Napoleon had annexed Savoy and Nice in agreement with his Italian allies, for whom he had secured Lombardy from Austria. Any acquisition, however inoffensive, by a ruler bearing the name of Napoleon was calculated to give Englishmen sleepless nights. By interposing their commercial treaty at this juncture, Gladstone and Cobden gave the mercantile community a sound mercantile motive for setting their faces against a French war.

One aspect of a Chancellor's duties remains to be mentioned. A Chancellor is not Prime Minister ; he is not the master of the chiefs of the great spending departments, but neither is he their servant. He is, or ought to be, the friend and guardian of the tax-payer, the champion of economy within the Cabinet. No Chancellor ever took this part of his duties more seriously than Gladstone ; the now hackneyed watchwords " peace, retrenchment, and reform " were to him the beginning and end of sound finance. It is characteristic of his whole career that his very last struggle within his last Cabinet was a struggle to reduce expenditure on the navy.[1]

Finance was Gladstone's main activity from the accession of the Aberdeen Cabinet in 1852 till the death of Lord Palmerston in 1865. It remains to notice a few events in the wider history of that period, and to show how they affected his career.

The Aberdeen government quickly found itself involved in the diplomatic controversy which led up to the Crimean War. The general opinion to-day is that that war both could have been and ought to have been avoided, and such was in after years the view of Lord Aberdeen himself. Certain it is that most of the members of the Aberdeen government were genuinely anxious to avoid war, and were dragged forward by the pugnacity of the Turks, abetted and encouraged by their own ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. This ambassador they did not dare to dismiss, because his dismissal would involve the resignation of Lord Palmerston, and that, in turn, the downfall of the government itself, of which Palmerston was the most popular member. The downfall of the government would be probably followed by the accession of a Palmerston government, and so—war ! The country, in fact, was all for war, and the government all but one against it. The

[1] In 1894, at which date, of course, the modern German navy had not yet been begun.

attempt of English historians to shift the blame for the war on to the French Emperor is made in defiance of the evidence.

Gladstone, however, even though twenty years later he was to lead a crusade for the expulsion of the Turks " bag and baggage " [1] from the Turkish territories preponderantly inhabited by Christian peoples, never admitted either the error or the injustice of this war in their defence. Russia, he held, both at that date and long afterwards, was seeking to violate the law of Europe and to treat Turkey as she had treated Poland. England and France, he held, were engaged in maintaining the said law against a law-breaker. From the standpoint of the Christian peoples oppressed by Turkish rule, the question would assume a different appearance, no doubt, but even the Neapolitan prisons had not yet converted Gladstone to what is now called the principle of self-determination.

Half way through the war the Aberdeen Cabinet gave place to a " win the war " government under the premiership of Lord Palmerston, and Gladstone and his fellow Peelites, after a month's service in that government, withdrew from it. They distrusted Palmerston's methods, and had convinced themselves that it was now possible to secure a " peace without victory," [2] which would achieve all the objects for which the war had been undertaken. They may have been right, but such a course never commends itself to the war-mind of the man in the street, and by associating themselves with the thorough-going pacifists, Cobden and Bright, they made themselves for the time being the most unpopular political group in the country. Gladstone found characteristic consolation in re-reading, in his Homer, the

[1] It is often assumed in newspapers to-day that Gladstone advocated the expulsion of the Turks " bag and baggage " from Europe, including Constantinople. He did not. He merely advocated their expulsion from all lands where Christians formed the majority of the population, and this principle is now generally accepted. His actual words were, " bag and baggage, out from the province thay have desolated and profaned." The province referred to is Bulgaria.

[2] The phrase is President Wilson's and dates from 1917.

story of another Sebastopol. It is also characteristic of him that even while still in office his interests were almost equally divided between the war and the reform of the University of Oxford. To the plain man, this might well seem like fiddling during the burning of Rome.

The Crimean War established Lord Palmerston, now seventy years old, as the most powerful minister England had known since the fall of Peel, and the most popular since the great days of the elder Pitt. Three subsequent general elections, in 1857, 1859, and 1865, decisively confirmed this popularity. The English people desired to be ruled by Lord Palmerston, and rule them he did (with the exception of fifteen months occupied by a brief Derby ministry in 1858-9), from the middle of the Crimean War to the day of his death at the age of eighty, ten years later. The secret of Lord Palmerston's hold upon the public was that he was above all things a patriot and a sportsman. His mind was untroubled by political theories or political ideals, but he was inspired by a vivid, perhaps a reckless, national pride, and a determination that England should play a part on the world-stage worthy of the foremost nation upon earth. The foundations of his popularity had been laid in 1850 over the absurd affair of Don Pacifico. The said Don was a Levantine Jew, whose house, for insufficient reasons, was sacked by his neighbours in Athens. He presented to the Greek government a notoriously excessive demand for compensation, which that government refused to pay. But he was a citizen of Gibraltar, and so a British subject, and Palmerston, as foreign secretary, ordered out the British fleet and seized a number of Greek vessels. In the House of Commons, Peel (in his last speech), Gladstone, and Disraeli, combined to attack the government, but Palmerston triumphed over them all with the attractive principle that British citizenship ensured to its possessors, as Roman citizenship had ensured to St. Paul, protection against the nefarious proceedings of what Mr. Kipling has since called " lesser breeds without

the law," all the world over. The absurdity of the parallel from Roman citizenship is apparent when one remembers that St. Paul's citizenship protected him *within*, but not outside, the Roman Empire. If the apostle's missionary zeal had led him to preach the gospel in Parthia or Germany, and he had there been molested, one can hardly imagine that the diplomatists of the Emperor Nero would have bestirred themselves on his account. Palmerston's policy is seen at its best in the moral support he lent to the Italian revolution of 1860; at its weakest when, in 1864, he led the Danes to think that he would support their very dubious claims against Austria and Prussia, without being in fact in a position to translate his words into action; and at its worst when, in 1857, he upheld the British representative in China who, in revenge for the seizure of a small British vessel on a charge of piracy, directed the British naval squadron to bombard Canton.

Such was the leader whom Gladstone joined as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1859. He distrusted Palmerston as deeply as he had trusted his former chiefs, Aberdeen and Peel, but he felt no hesitation in choosing this course as the least of three evils. Thirteen years of Peelite independence had proved disastrous to the stability of British politics, and could not be continued. To join the Derby-Disraeli Conservatives was out of the question. Palmerston was, it was true, antipathetic to him, but he was already very old, and with the rank and file of his party Gladstone was in closer sympathy. Gladstone had in fact become a Liberal, and the future leadership of the Liberal party was his, if he could for the next few years work in harness with its somewhat un-Liberal chief.

Gladstone's pre-occupation for the next six years was his battle for economy. He was confronted at the outset with a popular scare on the subject of a forthcoming war with France. Napoleon III. had secured Savoy and Nice as a reward for his services to the cause of Italian independ-

ence, and those who liked to suppose that history repeated itself, imagined that the new Napoleon was about to follow in the footsteps of the old. Two years later there was a threat of war with Abraham Lincoln's American government, then engaged in the reconquest of the South. This was followed by the Danish excitement already mentioned. Gladstone stuck resolutely through thick and thin to his anti-militarist guns. During these six years (1859-1865) the army and navy estimates curved upward and then downward again, and were two million pounds lower at the end than at the beginning.

The most graceful and generous action of Palmerston's foreign policy, an action which has few historical parallels, was also due to Gladstone's influence—the gratuitous and unforced surrender to Greece of the Ionian Islands, which had come into our possession during the Napoleonic War. Gladstone could speak with unique authority on the subject of these islands, as he had paid them an official visit to enquire into their political condition, at the request of Lord Derby's government, in 1858.

In the summer of 1865 a general election returned another Palmerstonian majority, but Gladstone was unseated at Oxford. The majority of the resident members of the University supported him as before, but the non-residents, largely country parsons, who had recently been given the privilege of voting by post, turned him out in favour of a staunch Tory. No doubt they felt towards the man who had pushed through the reform of the University much as the Duke of Newcastle had felt, nineteen years before, towards the man who supported the repeal of the Corn Law. From Oxford he turned for support to the very different constituency of South Lancashire, and was enthusiastically elected. Lord Palmerston had recently remarked to a friend: "Gladstone is a dangerous man; keep him in Oxford and he is partially muzzled, but send him elsewhere and he will run wild." By an astonishing coincidence, for

such it was, Gladstone endorsed Palmerston's forecast in a sentence which used his old chief's own metaphor. "At last, my friends," he said in an election speech at Manchester, "I come among you 'unmuzzled.'" Continuing, he proceeded to contrast the "home of lost causes" [1] that had rejected him, with his new constituency, which had the reputation of thinking to-day what England would think to-morrow. "Here," he said, "I find development of industry, growth of enterprise, prevalence of toleration, and an ardent desire for freedom."

Three months later Lord Palmerston was dead. In the course of another year Lord Derby and Lord Russell retired from active politics. Lord Aberdeen was already dead. The old generation of aristocrats had left the stage, and Gladstone and Disraeli stood face to face.

(iii) GLADSTONE AND DISRAELI (1865-1880)

The death of Lord Palmerston brought into the foreground the question of a further instalment of Parliamentary Reform, a further extension, that is, of the privilege of voting at parliamentary elections, combined with a further redistribution of seats in the interests of the growing centres of population. The authors of the first Reform Bill had not been democrats, and their object had been less to take a step towards democracy than to avert that disease by a skilfully administered homœopathy, which would enfranchise the property-owning shopkeepers, "those hundreds of thousands of respectable persons," as Lord Brougham said when introducing the bill into the House of Lords, "the most numerous and (in the aggregate) by far the most wealthy order in the community." As for the mob, it was not, in Lord Brougham's eyes, an order at all, but, to borrow a term from Matthew Arnold, a *residuum*. This residuum had none the less clamoured and rioted in support of a bill

[1] The phrase is Matthew Arnold's, not Gladstone's.

which did nothing for them, for they regarded it as a first step towards democracy. And the residuum was right in this forecast, and the statesmen wrong. A first step it turned out to be, and the second step had been in contemplation ever since 1849. Since that date Whigs and Tories had each of them introduced Reform Bills ; Lord John Russell, now Prime Minister, had introduced as many as three. But Lord Palmerston had disliked the subject. He had never been enthusiastic about even the first Reform Bill. He was a Whig of the old school, and " liberty " meant to him what it had meant to the authors of the Whig Revolution of 1688, namely, government by the aristocracy unhampered by the interference of the Crown.

Yet it was plain to both parties that the ranks of " respectable persons " had been extended since the days of Lord Brougham. There was, for example, the growing body of Trade Unionists. The American Civil War, carried to its triumphant conclusion in the very year of Lord Palmerston's death, taught Gladstone, and possibly others, that a government resting upon a democracy could show a coolness, a sobriety, and a determination, quite equal to that shown by any government in history. Not less impressive was the calm fortitude of the unenfranchised Lancashire cotton spinners during the cotton famine caused by the American war. In fact these residuary persons had believed that the North would win and that the North was in the right, at a time when Gladstone [1] and nearly all the statesmen of England had held the opposite, and mistaken, opinion on both these points. In 1864 Gladstone had said that " every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger, is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution." The orator went on, it is true, to call attention to the dangers of " sudden, violent, excessive, or intoxicating change " ;

[1] In later years Gladstone described his pro-Southern attitude towards the American Civil War as " a mistake of incredible grossness."

but a new principle had been enunciated by a member of the government, and Lord Palmerston was properly disturbed. Had either party, had Gladstone himself, accepted the simple principle of one man, one vote, the extraordinary complications of the next two years would have been avoided. Both parties, however, proved to be wedded to the principles of 1832; there was a new class ripe for enfranchisement, but there was still an unenfranchisable residuum. The difficulty was to discover the line between the two.

The leaders of both parties were pledged to Reform, but the bulk of the Conservative rank and file were opposed to it; a majority also of the Liberals, who had been elected to support, not Russell and Gladstone, but the late Lord Palmerston, were also hostile. Elected candidates are also naturally predisposed to consider that the constituencies which have had the good sense to elect them, could be altered only for the worse. It was therefore necessary to proceed with circumspection. In 1866 Gladstone introduced the Liberal government's Reform Bill in the House of Commons. It was an extremely moderate measure, and dealt with franchise only, not redistribution of seats. It was, however, defeated by a combination of the Conservatives and the dissentient Liberals led by Robert Lowe.[1] The ministry resigned, and a Derby-Disraeli government took office without dissolving parliament. Popular agitation outside the House now made a hero of Gladstone, and thereby convinced Disraeli that, unless the Tories were to suffer political extinction, it was absolutely necessary for him to

[1] The following epitaph was afterwards composed for this honest and eloquent, but quarrelsome, politician:

Here lie the bones of Robert Lowe,
A faithful friend, a bitter foe.
Whither the restless spirit's flown
Cannot be thought of, much less known.
If for the realm of light and love,
Concord no longer reigns above;
If it has found a lower level,
The Lord have mercy on the Devil.

established in Ireland as in England, and had ever since remained the most conspicuous symbol of the English ascendancy. Gladstone's bill severed the Irish Protestant Church's connection with the State, and took away part of its endowments. The Church was to retain, in addition to its churches and parsonages, sufficient funds to provide for the life interests of its clergy, and the rest of the endowments were to be devoted to the relief of poverty and distress in the country. Over this measure Gladstone incurred, for the first and by no means the last time, the displeasure of his sovereign. Mr. Lytton Strachey, in his admirable *Life of Queen Victoria*, has called attention to the great importance of the career of the Prince Consort, and of his premature death in 1861. How the influence of that remarkable man would have developed itself, had his life been prolonged, it is hard to say. Mr. Strachey suggests that it would have made for the increase of the power of the Crown and the subordination of the Prime Minister. It is equally possible that it would have smoothed the path of Gladstone. The Prince had been a devoted admirer of Peel, and he might well have come to cherish the same feelings towards Peel's greatest disciple. Both the Prince and Gladstone were devout and strenuous spirits, passionately intent upon moral and material progress. It is possible that the sympathies of the Court, which were to be won by the oriental courtesies of Disraeli, would have been secured by the opposite camp.

The Queen's hostility was carefully guarded ; not so that of the House of Lords. The Lords rejected the government's scheme for disendowment, and, had he wished, Gladstone could have anticipated the policy of Mr. Lloyd George in 1910, and raised the question of the Lords versus the Country. But, judged by twentieth century standards, Gladstone was almost a Conservative, and he preferred to work for a compromise ; which he secured with the help of Tait, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Cairns, the Tory ex-Lord Chancellor, two of the most level-headed men of

the day. The Lords ultimately accepted the government scheme of disendowment with a few minor alterations.

In 1870 Gladstone was free to turn from the Irish Church to Irish land, from the Pope to the potato. One result of the English conquests of Ireland under Elizabeth, and afterwards under Cromwell, had been to establish English landlords in possession of the greater part of the soil of Ireland. These landlords were generally Protestants ; they were generally absentees ; very often they were exceedingly poor, and their estates were in the control of middlemen or mortgagees. " These causes,[1] coupled with the small size and great number of the tenants' holdings, prevented Irish landlords from doing what English landlords have always done—erecting the buildings and making the necessary improvements on the holdings of their tenants. What the Irish landlords let to their tenants was only the bare soil, and it was left to the tenant to make all the improvements necessary for its cultivation. Thus there arose a sort of co-partnership : the landlord found the land and the tenant the improvements. But this co-partnership did not—except in Ulster—involve the legal consequences which might seem logically to follow. There was no dual ownership ; and the tenant had no legal property in the improvements he had made. Irish tenants generally held their farms by yearly tenancies, terminable at six months' notice. If the notice to quit were served, the tenant was at the mercy of the landlord. He might quit, or in other words be evicted ; and in that case his improvements reverted to the landlord. He might be allowed to stay ; in that case his rent would probably be raised, in view of the increased value which his own improvements had given to his holding."

There were two possible ways out of this monstrous situation. The government might secure to the tenant a genuine partnership, the " three F's " as they came to be

[1] The rest of this paragraph is quoted from Mr. Ernest Barker's admirable *Ireland in the last Fifty Years*.

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called, fair rent, fixity of tenure, and (in case of removal) freedom to sell his own improvements ; or they might assist the tenant to buy out the landlord, compelling the landlord to sell, at a fixed price, where the tenant wanted to buy, and thus make the tenant an owner. The second plan was finally carried through by a Conservative government in 1903 ; it was set before Gladstone in 1870 by his colleague, John Bright, the old Anti-Corn Law agitator, but Gladstone preferred the less revolutionary policy of partnership between landlord and tenant under legal regulation. The Land Act of 1870, however, stopped a long way short of genuine partnership and the " Three F's." Its provisions need not detain us ; for they proved a complete failure. The importance of the first Gladstonian Land Act is that it was an attempt, even though an unsuccessful attempt, to legislate in the interests of the Irish tenant against the landlord. A new problem had been brought within the reach of parliament, and the Irish would see to it that the problem was not put aside until it had been satisfactorily solved.

The same year (1870) saw the passage into law of the Education Act, which established, in most of its essential features, our present national elementary school system. Gladstone was, oddly enough, not much interested in the subject, and the bill was piloted through the House of Commons by Forster, one of the least tactful of his subordinates. It raised, as all our education bills have done, bitter wrangles, between Churchmen and Nonconformists, on the question of the type of religious teaching supplied in the schools, and the Nonconformist support, which had encouraged the government in their attack upon the Irish Church Establishment, cooled off into hostility.

The year 1870 is memorable for an event much greater than any piece of Gladstonian legislation, the Franco-German War. Gladstone resolutely maintained the honour and dignity of England in this crisis by proposing, at the opening of the war, a treaty to France and Prussia, providing

that, if either violated the neutrality of Belgium, Great Britain would co-operate with the other for its defence. Prussia accepted at once and France after ten days' delay. Less agreeable to English pride was what followed farther east. Russia, relying on the friendship of Prussia, seized the opportunity to tear up the treaty made after the Crimean War, which had excluded her warships from the Black Sea. Gladstone had never approved of this treaty, and short of a war with Russia there was no means of enforcing it. Yet to take the Russian "insult" "lying down" would have offended the deepest instincts of the natural Englishman. The government had the adroitness and good fortune to secure the friendly offices of Count Bismarck. A Conference of the Powers met in London, and solemnly gave Russia permission to do what she would otherwise have done unpermitted. The decencies were thus preserved, and Sebastopol rose again from its ruins.

One more important action in the sphere of foreign policy marked the Gladstone government. Owing to English official negligence ten years back, the Southern rebel States in the American Civil War had succeeded in purchasing and equipping in English waters a privateer, the celebrated *Alabama*, which committed immense depredations on the mercantile marine of the Northern States. In 1862 the American government demanded redress, which Lord Russell, then foreign secretary, refused. The dispute dragged on through various phases of complication, and was a serious source of ill-feeling between the two countries. Gladstone succeeded in getting the assessment of damages referred to an international tribunal at Geneva, and promptly paid the bill, which amounted to three million pounds. This was one of the wisest and best, and most unpopular, acts of his administration.

A few more of the domestic reforms of these years must be briefly recorded. University degrees were thrown open to Dissenters, Gladstone thereby abandoning one of the

most obstinate relics of his Toryism. The Civil Services were thrown open to competitive examination. The army was reorganised, and the incredible system of purchasing commissions abolished. Both the Queen and the House of Lords opposed this change, but Gladstone discovered that he could gratify the former and circumvent the latter by inviting the Queen to abolish the purchase system by a Royal Warrant. Another reform was the introduction of secret voting at elections. Had this been introduced when it was first demanded by the Chartists, nearly forty years before, it might have protected a certain class of voters from the activities of the Dukes of Newcastle of that day. But such dukes were no more, and the growth of democratic sentiment had made the Ballot Act well-nigh superfluous.

The fifth year of the government (1873) began, and the third pledge of the triple Irish programme, namely university education, was still unfulfilled. In truth it bristled with difficulties. Irish Catholics were unwilling to take advantage of the educational facilities offered them in the Protestant stronghold, Trinity College, Dublin. Peel had presented them, in 1845, with three non-sectarian colleges, which were denounced as godless. The Catholic hierarchy demanded, in fact, the endowment of a Catholic university, and this the English Protestant parliament would not grant. Protestant prejudice was reinforced by the arguments of radicals who distrusted ecclesiastical influences of all kinds upon education. Gladstone now laid before parliament a singular scheme for an endowed university, which should be forbidden to include the controversial topics of theology, modern history, and moral and mental philosophy, in its curriculum. The project was at once denounced by the leaders of the people for whom it was intended, and the bill was defeated in the House of Commons. Gladstone resigned, but Disraeli preferred to remain in opposition a little longer, and succeeded in getting the Liberals back into office for another six months. Then the end came.

Gladstone not only resigned office but, while retaining his seat in the House, withdrew from the leadership of the Liberal party. He felt that his work was done, and he longed for a few quiet years to devote to the scholarly and religious interests which absorbed him scarcely less than politics. After all, he was sixty-four, an age at which most men either have already retired, or are thinking of retiring, from professional life.[1] He would have been astonished and dismayed, could he have realised that, of the 1818 pages in the narrative of his future biographer, he had as yet worked through only 1130.

The government that now left office, though in many respects the best that governed England in the nineteenth century, is open to one formidable criticism. When that century comes to be surveyed from a distance, it will probably be found that one of the most important, if not the most important, aspects of the social history of England in that period was the development of working-class organisation in Trade Unions. That Gladstone was blind to the importance of this development and its need of parliamentary guidance and support, is the most serious limitation of his statesmanship. It so happened that, in 1867, a judicial decision had deprived the Unions of certain reasonable privileges which everyone had supposed that the law had assured to them since the legalisation of Trade Unions in 1824. Throughout the period during which the Gladstone government held office, the appeals of the Unions for legislation to reverse this judgment fell on deaf ears. Consequently, in 1874, the Trade Unionist vote was given to the Conservatives, and Disraeli repaid their support with the important Employers and Workmen Act of 1876. As Gladstone grew older, his indifference to industrial questions became more and more disastrously significant, and it

[1] His extraordinary physical strength was as yet unabated, for in this very year he walked thirty-three miles in a day over the hills and valleys of Scotland.

contributed to foster among the wage-earners that distrust of parliamentary methods and professions which is a feature of our own day.

Disraeli's majority in 1874 was very nearly as large as Gladstone's in 1868. At last, at the age of seventy, he enjoyed for the first time a secure tenure of power. His policy was to be something of a return to Palmerstonism, quiescence at home coupled with stimulating enterprise abroad, though the enterprise was to be directed into Imperial rather than European channels. The Queen was decorated with the new title of Empress of India, and an attempt made to conquer Afghanistan. England acquired a predominant financial interest in the Suez Canal, and entered into a partnership with France for the financial control of Egypt. In South Africa the Zulus were conquered and the Boer republics annexed. But what drew Gladstone from his retirement and launched him on the last and most stormy phase of his career, was the Disraelian attitude towards the Turkish problem which, in those years, once again distracted the powers of Europe.

The Turkish government at that date ruled a territory extending northward to the Danube and westward to the Adriatic, including the whole of modern Bulgaria, together with a large population of Serbs and Greeks. These populations had begun to dream of following the example of the Italians, and achieving national independence ; and they knew that their efforts would be seconded by Russia as readily as the efforts of the Italians had been seconded by France and England. In 1876 the Serbs and Bulgars were in full revolt. Russia, Austria, and Germany hereupon concerted a scheme of reforms which Turkey should be forced to carry out under European supervision. England, France, and Italy were invited to co-operate with the three other powers. England alone, under Disraeli's guidance, refused, and the Turks, encouraged to think that they had an ally behind them, entered upon the suppression

of the Bulgarian rebellion. Tales, true tales, of revolting atrocities spread to England. Disraeli dismissed the reports as " coffee house babble," but Gladstone, deeply buried though he was in preparations for an article on the congenial theme of " Future Retribution," was moved as he had been moved a quarter of a century before by the Neapolitan prisons. He rushed into the fray with a pamphlet on " The Bulgarian Atrocities," which stirred the country as no pamphlet had stirred it since Burke's " Reflections on the French Revolution," and then followed up the pamphlet with a series of resolutions in the House of Commons.

Disraeli's policy continued on pro-Turkish lines, and destroyed the possibility of effective intervention by the Powers. Russia found herself forced into war by the enthusiasm of her own people. The Russian armies moved southwards on Constantinople, and Disraeli sent the British fleet through the Dardanelles. War between England and Russia was narrowly averted, and the Congress of Berlin, though it did not turn the Turks " bag and baggage out from the province they had desolated and profaned," at least greatly reduced the sphere of their activities and created a virtually independent Bulgaria. The details of these transactions do not belong to a study of Gladstone's statesmanship. What concerns us here is that Gladstone had made one of his most striking contributions to British political ideas : he had implanted in the mind of the ordinary Englishman a vivid realisation of the horrors of Turkish rule.[1] Also he had, both outside parliament and within it, resumed, in fact though not in name, the leadership of the Liberal party.

The destruction of the Beaconsfield [2] government and all

[1] It is perhaps worth recording here that the last public meeting ever addressed by Mr. Gladstone was a meeting to protest against the Armenian atrocities committed by the Turks of a later date (Liverpool, 1896).

[2] Disraeli had accepted an Earldom in 1876, in order to avoid the overwork involved in attending to the business of the House of Commons.

its works now appeared to Gladstone in the light of an almost sacred duty. An occasion for getting to work soon presented itself. He was invited to stand at the next election for the Tory stronghold of Midlothian, and in 1879 he undertook a fortnight's oratorical campaign in his new constituency. This Midlothian campaign, as it came to be called, marked a new development in British political habits. Ever since the enlargement of the constituencies, the growth of the habit of reading, and the development of the cheap newspaper press (which last may be dated from Gladstone's repeal of the Paper Duties in 1860), great statesmen had been looking more and more over the heads of the elected Commons to their constituents. The art and practice of democratic, some would say demagogic, appeal was developing, and the Midlothian campaign gave it a powerful impetus. Gladstone's "verbosity" was denounced in old-fashioned quarters as "a positive danger to the commonwealth." In a series of amazing outbursts of oratory he reviewed and chastised the activities of the government in Turkey, in Cyprus, in Afghanistan, and in Zululand, illustrating throughout his unique gift for arraigning political actions before a moral tribunal. In March 1880, three months later, Lord Beaconsfield dissolved parliament, and the general election showed that the Midlothian campaign had done its work. The Liberals were returned with a majority of 119, exclusive of the Irish vote.[1] A year later the old Tory antagonist was dead; but, from Gladstone's point of view, the evil that men do was proved to live after them. The new government inherited from Beaconsfield's imperialist ventures a trio of entanglements, in India, in Egypt, and in South Africa. The policy of extrication in India proved comparatively simple and successful; but in South Africa it led to Majuba, and in Egypt to Khartoum.

[1] The Irish vote returned twenty-five Conservatives, thirteen Liberals, and sixty-one Home Rulers.

(iv) THE EARLY EIGHTIES (1880-1885)

When Gladstone carried his party to victory in the general election of 1868, he had based his claim to the support of the electorate on a programme of constructive reforms which, during the years of office that followed, he succeeded in translating, for the most part, into legislation. The victory of 1880, on the other hand, was won by very different tactics. The programme of constructive reforms, in so far as there was one at all, was entirely overshadowed by the battle-cry, " Down with Beaconsfieldism." The result was therefore negative. The country indicated that it agreed with Gladstone in being weary of alarums and excursions in remote parts of the world, with their inevitable accompaniment of increased military expenditure, but it indicated little else. The new government was committed to the policy of disentanglement abroad, but its policy of liberal legislation at home, except for a promised extension of the franchise, was still to seek, and it might be said that, during the five years life of the government, it was never found.

Several reasons for this failure may be suggested. Disentanglement in South Africa and in Egypt proved a prolonged and distracting business. Irish unrest, not only in Ireland but within the House of Commons itself, took on a new and formidable character. Yet it may be doubted whether, even if the government of 1880 had been given a clear course instead of a course beset with pitfalls and obstacles, it would have rivalled the performances of the first Gladstone government. For the new government was by no means united and at ease with itself. The Liberal party was passing through the awkward transition from the Whiggery of Lord Palmerston to the Radicalism of the pre-war Lloyd George. Seldom has a British government suffered from a clearer division between its " Right " and " Left " wings. On the one side were the Whig nobles led by Lord Hartington who, with less brilliance and daring

but more solid common-sense, carried on the traditions of Lord Palmerston. On the other side were the new Radicals, led by Chamberlain, the Birmingham manufacturer, a Nonconformist, and, it was rumoured, a republican, who was terrifying the old-fashioned by importing American methods of centralised party organisation into English politics. Gladstone belonged to neither wing. Both buffeted him, but neither could do without him, for both owed to him rather than to themselves the support of the Liberal electorate. Gladstone was the Ark of the Liberal Covenant and, as a necessity of self-preservation, the two rival "Liberal" armies had to agree to carry him into battle together. The necessity for this co-operative effort was proved when the split came over the Home Rule Bill in 1886. After that split the Liberal party was excluded from power for twenty years.[1]

There is also a deeper reason for the constructive impotence of this government. Dicey, in his lectures on "Law and Opinion in England in the Nineteenth Century," divides the century into three periods: the period of Tory quiescence, ending about 1825; the period of individualist legislation, extending onwards to 1870, or, perhaps one should say, the end of Gladstone's first government; and the period of collectivist legislation, covering the remainder of the century. The characteristic of individualist legislation is emancipation; by such legislation the individual is set free from hampering restrictions, and allowed to follow his own bent. Under this heading would be included the whole of the Free Trade movement, the extension of religious equality, the extension of the suffrage, and even a pacific foreign policy, which allows the individual to spend his own money instead of handing it over to the government to spend it for him. The characteristic of collectivist legislation, on

[1] The Liberal government of 1892-1895 can hardly be said to have possessed "power," and is therefore no exception to the statement in the text.

the other hand, is organisation. It extends, instead of contracting, the activities of government. Under this heading would be included all legislation regulating the relations of employers and employed in industry, legislation which takes the tax-payers' money for public use in education, pensions, or insurance, and also imperialist foreign policy, involving increased armaments and more frequent wars. Of course, the dates indicated must not be pressed too closely. There was collectivist legislation before 1870 in the Factory Acts, and individualist legislation after 1870 in the third Reform Act and other measures. None the less, Dicey's classification holds good in general, and is a useful aid to the understanding of the nineteenth century.

Gladstone was, in the main, a man of the second or individualist period. It is true his first government had carried an Education Act, but the measure was hardly part of Gladstone's personal statesmanship. It is true also that the Irish Land Act was essentially a collectivist measure, but then Ireland was an exceptional country requiring exceptional treatment. Gladstone remained at heart an individualist, a fact which explains his lack of interest in those industrial and social problems which could only be approached by collectivist legislation. It is true that the government of 1880 carried the first Employers' Liability Act, establishing a compulsory system of compensation for industrial accidents, but the bill was Chamberlain's rather than Gladstone's. In fact, the work of individualist legislation was well-nigh done, and Gladstone was beginning to pay the penalty of longevity by surviving into an epoch in which he was an anachronism. He had indeed retired from leadership in 1874, and only the call to destroy " Beaconsfieldism " had brought him back on to the stage. He was again contemplating an early retirement, when " Beaconsfieldism " should have been destroyed. Yet this work of destruction proved a lengthy matter ; and there was the third Reform Bill to be put through, when Ireland would give one a breathing space ; and there was the

Liberal party, to which his personality became more and more essential, as his outlook on politics grew more and more out of date. And then, when retirement might have come, with the end of the 1880 parliament, he discovered one more great individualist cause after his own heart, " the best and the last," Home Rule for Ireland. For that cause the old man husbanded the last dregs of his enormous vitality, and clung to his post at the head of his party, defying the handicap of deafness and blindness, until beyond his eighty-fourth birthday. But in so far as Liberalism meant Gladstone, it had narrowed down into a policy with a single plank.

We have now to survey the various troublesome problems that beset the path of Gladstone's second government. The first days of the parliament added a fresh one to the list, a problem which revealed Gladstone at his best and a good many other people at their worst, the case of the atheist member, Charles Bradlaugh. Bradlaugh, unlike all the atheists and agnostics who had sat in parliament before him, took his religion, or non-religion, so seriously as to refuse to take the necessary oath of allegiance, and demanded the right to " affirm " his loyalty without any mention of the Deity. A committee, appointed to consider this request, decided, by a most unfortunate majority of one, that the law did not permit such affirmation. Yet Bradlaugh was an elected member, and to reject his claim to sit was to disfranchise his constituents. Here was one of those ridiculous questions that are a godsend to an alert and unscrupulous opposition ; and a small group of four clever young men, the so-called " Fourth Party," led by Lord Randolph Churchill, stepped forward to make the most of it. At their backs were all the serried ranks of honest bigotry, ignoble prejudice, and party spite. Bradlaugh was an ideal " case " for their purpose. He had already made himself a national bogey by his advocacy of the use of artificial methods for controlling the birth-rate, and he

plunged into the constitutional and legal battles, in which he now found himself involved, with a demagogic energy equalling that of John Wilkes, who had similarly fought against exclusion from the House of Commons a hundred years before. The battle raged in one form and another throughout the lifetime of the 1880 parliament, in which Bradlaugh was never allowed to take his seat.

Gladstone took the line which everyone to-day would accept. It might, he argued, have been reasonable in certain periods of history to demand from members of parliament an adherence to the Christian religion, or even to a genuine belief in an active and all-seeing Providence guarding the lives of men. The day for imposing such a test, all agreed, was past. The opposition were insisting upon the verbal acceptance of a mere "shibboleth," a meaningless password, a "god of some sort or another," as one member had described it. Such a test was valueless and hypocritical. One of Gladstone's noblest speeches was made in defence of his Affirmation Bill of 1883; the bill was defeated by three votes.

Toleration, it has been said, is of two kinds. You may be tolerant of differences of opinion in matters which you deem of no importance. Such is the toleration of Laodicea, and it is as near to a vice as to a virtue. The other sort of toleration is that which holds that, even in matters of the weightiest import, truth can only secure a fair chance of victory, if its antagonist is allowed to fight it on equal terms. Such was the toleration of Socrates, of Milton's *Areopagitica*, and of Gladstone. It may have been some gain to Christianity that the rights of the atheist were championed by one of the most fervent Christians that ever took part in politics.

The Fourth Party gave Gladstone a good deal of trouble during these years. He cherished an old-fashioned reverence, inherited from Burke and from Pym and Hampden, for all the activities of "the Mother of Parliaments." He

therefore took the Fourth Party seriously, and answered them courteously and abundantly, on occasions when no modern Prime Minister would have paid them the slightest attention. In so far as modern Prime Ministers ignore and slight the activities of the House, the fault must be laid in part at the door of those who turned the House from a genuine debating assembly into a ring for the baiting of ministers. But the Fourth Party was nothing to the Third Party, the new Irish Nationalist party under the leadership of Parnell.

The Reform Bill of 1867 had had one result which neither Gladstone nor Disraeli, its joint authors, foresaw; it called into existence a Nationalist, or Home Rule, party in Ireland. During the seventies that party was led by the eloquent and amiable Isaac Butt, who introduced a series of resolutions in favour of Home Rule in the House of Commons, all of which were defeated by the combined action of the Liberals and Conservatives of the larger island. They provided an annual oratorical entertainment, and no more. They revealed, in fact, that, where two communities of different sizes and different character are represented in a single parliament, the representation of the smaller community is illusory. This point was seized by Parnell, who ousted Butt from the leadership of the party in 1878, and at once set about securing attention for the claims of Ireland by methods other than parliamentary argument. First he developed a plan of organised "obstruction"; he and his followers, that is to say, used the privileges of free debate to move endless resolutions and make endless speeches, which reduced the work of the House to chaos. This was met, after many all-night sittings, by the adoption of new rules of procedure, the system of the "closure," whereby debates were conducted under a fixed time-table, proposed in advance by the government and approved by the majority. Thus the House of Commons ceased to be a free deliberative assembly. Parnell also established a close alliance with the old physical force party in Ireland, the Fenians, and with

the Land League, an institution founded in 1879 by an old Fenian, Michael Davitt, for organising the united action of Irish tenants on lines roughly similar to the strike action of a Trade Union. Thus, just as to-day a Labour M.P., who also controls a powerful Trade Union, is in a position to say, "If you will not accept my proposal, a million workers will go on strike next week," so Parnell was in a position to say, "If you will not accept my proposal, the tenants of Ireland will refuse to pay their rents, and will 'boycott'[1] the rent collectors."

Gladstone's Land Act of 1870 had never achieved its purpose, and the bad harvests of 1878 and 1879 had caused a recurrence of distress such as had followed the great potato famine. In 1880 he introduced the so-called Compensation for Disturbance Bill, intended to protect from eviction tenants who could prove that their inability to pay rent was due to the bad harvests. The bill was, most unfortunately, thrown out by the Lords, and Parnell at once let loose the forces of the Land League and reduced Ireland to chaos. Thus a topic, which had barely been mentioned in the general election, at once leapt to the centre of the political stage. The government advanced with an olive branch in one hand and a sword in the other,—coercion, in the form of suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and the promise of a new Land Act. Parnell and thirteen of his associates inside and outside parliament were arrested in November 1880, and imprisoned for two months. Gladstone consented very unwillingly to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act: he would have preferred milder measures. But most of his colleagues insisted on it, and to have held out would have been to break up the government, before it had completed its pre-ordained task of reversing the Beaconsfield imperial policy.

The Land Act of 1881 was the most complicated measure

[1] The word "boycott" comes from the name of a land agent, Captain Boycott, who was "boycotted" in 1881.

that had ever been submitted to parliament. Roughly speaking, it placed on the Statute Book the famous " Three F's " of the Irish programme, fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale for the out-going tenant's improvements. In an absurd phrase of the day, it " banished political economy to Saturn " ; that is to say, it abandoned the principle of free contract so dear to the classical individualist economists. Government Land Courts were established to fix rents. But Parnell was not satisfied. Test cases were submitted to the courts under the auspices of the Land League, and as the awards were considered inadequate, the courts were boycotted. The government replied by putting Parnell a second time in Kilmainham prison. This step Gladstone afterwards regarded as a mistake ; certainly the result of the removal of the Irish dictator, who alone could control the forces he had roused, was a rapid increase of crime.

The situation seemed hopeless, but early in 1882 Gladstone believed he had found a way out, and it is characteristic of the man that pride (true or false pride according to the reader's judgment) did not deter him from adopting it. Parnell was naturally anxious to get out of prison and regain control of the movement, which was degenerating into mere imbecile violence. Could not an informal bargain be struck ? Apparently it could. The prisoners were released on May 2nd, 1882. It was understood that Parnell would put down violence, and that Gladstone would secure amendments to the Land Act in accordance with Parnell's wishes, and drop coercion. As an earnest of the change of attitude, a new Irish Viceroy (Lord Spencer) was appointed, and the Irish Secretary, Mr. Forster, who had committed himself to the unfortunate view that the Irish agitation was merely the work of " village roughs," was succeeded by Lord Frederick Cavendish. Then came the blow which dashed to the ground the hopes of both the parties to this so-called " Kilmainham Treaty." Four days after Parnell's release from prison, Lord Frederick Cavendish and the assistant-

secretary, Mr. Burke, were murdered in Phoenix Park. Logically, this crime of irresponsible assassins should not have invalidated the new understanding, but man is not a logical animal, and coercion descended on Ireland like a London fog for the remaining three years of the Gladstone government.

This is the fitting place to consider in general terms the policy of the Irish Land Act of 1881. As far back as 1870, as has already been said, two policies had confronted the government, the policy of regulating by external authority the economic relations of landlord and tenant (which was the policy adopted), and the more revolutionary policy of state-aided land purchase, which would abolish the landlord and make the tenant an owner. The first policy, that of 1870 and 1881, proved in the upshot a failure. In the first place the "fair" assessment of rent by the land courts proved well-nigh impossible. Further, the attempt to eliminate the influence of competition from the rent simply transferred it elsewhere, to the price payable for the tenant's improvements on the occasion of free sale. These were often sold at an annual value of ten or twenty times the rent. In fact, so long as there were more Irishmen competing for the land than the land under existing forms of cultivation would bear, tenants would pay, in one way or another, more for the land than the land was worth. "Political economy," like "Nature" in the Latin tag, might be expelled with a pitchfork, but it found its way back again.

The problem has now been solved by the rival policy of land purchase. This was first suggested by Bright in 1870, attempted on a small scale by Lord Salisbury's government in 1885, and finally applied on a sweeping scale by the great Land Purchase Act of the Conservatives in 1903. The State advances money to the tenant on easy conditions of repayment, and the landlord is forced to sell on terms fixed by State intervention. It is perhaps worth remarking that Gladstone contemplated a sweeping Land Purchase Act for

1887, if he had carried his Home Rule Bill in 1886. But it would be a mistake to suppose that a mere Act of Parliament passed in Westminster has solved, or could by itself have solved, the Irish Agrarian problem. What has made the Land Purchase Act a success, and raised Ireland from being one of the worst to one of the best [1] agricultural countries in Europe, is not the wisdom of legislators so much as the beneficent activities of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society founded by Sir Horace Plunkett in 1889.

We have not yet touched any of those problems of imperial policy to which, by its election pledges, the attention of Gladstone's government was specially dedicated. One of these was the South African question, and the government's handling of it led up to the notorious accident of Majuba Hill. We have now to consider the part played by Gladstone in this series of events, and the evidence of his statesmanship that it affords. This is not at all an easy task. It is a sound assumption of British politics that a Prime Minister must be held responsible for all the mistakes and misfortunes of his government. He is responsible for the choice of his agents, and *quod facit per alium, facit per se*. In private business, the head of a firm loses money if his subordinates make mistakes, and it is thus his interest to tune up the whole concern to the highest pitch of efficiency. In politics, the head of the government must be made to suffer an equivalent loss in reputation, and for the same reason. None the less, when we pass from the judgments of contemporary politics to the disinterested retrospect of history, it is at once apparent that the mistake of a subordinate, though it may reflect upon the chief, is not the same thing as the mistake of the chief. The responsibilities of a Prime Minister of the British Empire, especially in troublous times such as the early eighties, are so vast and various that it is not humanly possible for him to give equal attention to all parts of his

[1] One of the best, provided, of course, that agriculture is not interrupted by guerilla warfare.

duties at once. All that can be demanded of him is that his attention shall be rightly distributed; that, when a particular problem is reaching a critical stage, the Prime Minister's attention shall be switched on to it. It is along these lines and no others that Gladstone can be fairly judged for his share in the disasters of Majuba and of Khartoum.

The Boer Republic known as the Transvaal had been recognised as independent by the British Government in 1852. The white population was small, less than fifty thousand, scattered over a country considerably larger than England. During the seventies the Boers had been steadily losing ground in a struggle with their warlike neighbours, the Zulus. Disraeli's government accepted the opinion of the British authorities at the Cape, that a sensational Zulu triumph was imminent, and that it would have disastrous results on British security in South Africa. Accordingly, with a view to dealing with the Zulus, the Transvaal was annexed to the British Empire (1877), as a preliminary to the Zulu War of 1879, in which the Zulus were suppressed. It was assumed, honestly but on very inadequate evidence, that the Boers welcomed annexation as their only means of security, and they were at once promised "the fullest legislative privileges compatible with the circumstances of the country and the intelligence of the people," whatever that carefully guarded phrase might mean. The Boers, however, made a practically unanimous protest against annexation, and, perhaps because this threw an unfavourable light on their "intelligence," no further steps were taken in the matter of self-governing institutions. Gladstone attacked both the Zulu War and the Transvaal annexation in the course of his Midlothian campaign, and Lord Hartington condemned the annexation in the House of Commons.

Then the Gladstone government came into power, and it was generally assumed, most of all by the Boers themselves, that the annexation would be reversed. But the new government soon found that the arguments against mere reversal

were apparently strong, and were strongly held by the British agents on the spot, who, being impressed with the evils that would follow in the form of a return to virtual anarchy in the Transvaal, seem to have hypnotised themselves into a belief that the Boers were becoming reconciled to annexation. A heavy responsibility always rests upon a government that turns down the advice of its agents on the spot. Was there not a third course, which would offer an escape from the dilemma? Sir Bartle Frere, the British High Commissioner, advocated the establishment of a federal government for South Africa, within which the Cape, the Transvaal, and Natal, would enjoy local self-government. The federal solution had been applied in Canada in 1867, and had solved the problems of the political relations of the English and French colonies. Would it not solve a similar problem in South Africa? To this plan the government committed themselves; but in vain. The Boers opposed it, and consequently the Dutch element in the Cape Colony secured its rejection in the Cape parliament.

By the end of 1880, eight months after the formation of Gladstone's government, the federal solution had become impracticable. The Boer leaders were still convinced, and rightly convinced, that, if only they could persuade the Liberal government of their determined opposition to annexation, that government would, on Midlothian principles, give them back their independence. Unfortunately the British government formed its judgment on the basis of the reports of its own agents on the spot, and these reports misrepresented the Boer attitude. One resource alone remained to the Boers. Since paper resolutions were disregarded, they must mobilise their forces. By January 1881, small Boer and British armies were aligned upon the frontier of Natal.

And now the government made its worst mistake. A paragraph in the Queen's Speech, opening parliament, announced that the authority of the British Government

must be vindicated before any steps were taken to reverse the annexation; in plain words, Boer disarmament must precede political settlement. By the end of January a first skirmish had taken place and resulted in a British repulse. Even now, Kruger, the leader of the Transvaal Boers, remained so convinced of the good intentions of the British government, if only they could be made to realise the facts, that he proposed an armistice and invited a British commission to come and discover the feeling of the country for itself. The proposal was in substance accepted, and further enquiries were forwarded through General Colley, the British commander, to the Boers, to which Colley appended a request for a reply within forty-eight hours. This unreasonably short interval passed without any reply being received. Colley thereupon moved a force of four hundred men on to Majuba Hill, with a view to strengthening his position in case hostilities were resumed. The Boers interpreted his action as a breach of the truce, and inflicted a severe defeat upon the little force. This was on February 26, five days after the sending of Colley's despatch demanding an answer in forty-eight hours. The despatch did not, in fact, reach Kruger till February 28, and he at once wrote, in ignorance of the event of Majuba, accepting the terms proposed.

Such was the tragic and ridiculous story of Majuba. The responsibility for fixing a time limit of forty-eight hours rests upon Colley alone; the British government had merely directed him to fix a "reasonable" time limit. Majuba, in fact, ought never to have happened, and Gladstone proceeded to act as if it had not happened. Having decided to reverse the annexation before the battle, he held to that decision, and the Transvaal once again became independent, subject, it is true, to a vague and meaningless British "suzerainty," which was abandoned three years later.

Had the annexation been reversed, without military incidents, in 1880, the action of the government would have met with very general approval in England. There was as

yet no goldfield on the Rand ; everyone was agreed that the Transvaal was more trouble than it was worth, and nearly everyone was agreed that annexation in the face of unanimous Boer opposition, was contrary to the best British traditions. But after Majuba the case was seen in a different light. The military spirit and the sporting instinct, both of them powerful ingredients in popular opinion, felt that withdrawal was now a dishonour to the flag, a national humiliation. It was even gravely suggested by Sir Hercules Robinson, who had succeeded Frere as High Commissioner, that, though we ought to adhere to the policy of withdrawal, we should first inflict a resounding defeat upon the Boer forces. It was perhaps Gladstone's greatest merit that he always resisted unflinchingly such promptings of national vanity. If withdrawal had been the right policy before Majuba, it was the right policy after it.

One word remains to be said. If the essence of statesmanship is foresight, as it is, then the only man who showed a really statesmanlike grasp of this Transvaal problem was not a politician but a soldier. In 1880, Sir Garnet Wolseley, Colley's predecessor in command of the British forces in South Africa, called attention to the fact that the Transvaal was rich in unmined gold ; that, in all probability, a great gold-mining industry would open in a few years' time, and draw to the Transvaal a British population far outnumbering the Boers ; and that this fact should be considered in any settlement of the problem. The forecast proved correct, but the warning had not been regarded ; and the result was a second and greater South African War eighteen years afterwards.

Meanwhile the Egyptian question, another Disraelian heritage, was moving in the year of Majuba towards a solution more popular with the nation, but also more embarrassing to the government. Egypt and the Soudan had been ruled since early in the nineteenth century by a military adventurer, Mehemet Ali, and his descendants, with

the title of Khedive, under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey. During most of the sixties and seventies the position of Khedive was held by Ismail. Oriental despots are not as a rule very subtle characters, and they are apt to conform to one or other of a few well-marked types. Ismail belonged to the familiar type of the spendthrift fool, and the only peculiar feature of him lay not in his character but in his circumstances. For the material of his follies was supplied to him, not by the traditional Shylocks of the Orient, but by the speculative investors of the West. By 1877 he was clearly on the verge of bankruptcy ; in his endeavours to pay the interest due to his English and French creditors, he had squeezed his wretched subjects dry. Thereupon the English and French governments stepped in, in the interests of the bondholders, and established a Dual Control of Egyptian finances. Ismail, after sundry wrigglings, was deposed, and the docile Tewfik established as Khedive in his place. Such was the position in 1880 when Gladstone's government took office.

Gladstone did not like the position : " Our first site in Egypt," he had said in 1877, " will be the almost certain egg of a North African Empire, that will grow and grow . . . till we finally join hands across the equator with Natal and Capetown." The " all-red route " from the Cape to Cairo was, in Gladstone's eyes, anything but a desirable consummation. Still, it was impossible at the moment to draw back, and events quite beyond the British government's control soon compelled it to move a great deal further forward. In 1881 a spirit of mutiny arose in the Egyptian army. The original causes of discontent were certain questions of the subordination of Egyptian to Turkish officers, but, as the movement grew in force, it grew in scope, and rapidly joined hands with a nationalist movement—" Egypt for the Egyptians "—aiming at the overthrow of the Dual Control. The Khedive was helpless in the face of the insurgents, and some form of intervention became absolutely necessary.

Gladstone made every effort to avoid saddling England with further Egyptian responsibilities. He invited the intervention of Turkey ; he invited the joint intervention of all the Great Powers. But the Turk was not to be tempted, and there was as yet no League of Nations.

It so happened that in 1881 Gambetta, the great imperialist, was Prime Minister of France. As a result of his strenuous advocacy, the dubious British government co-operated with the French in sending the Joint Note of January 1882, declaring that the two powers were resolved to guard by their united efforts against anything that might menace the existing order in Egypt. Such was, in Lord Morley's words, " the memorable starting point in what proved an amazing journey." It was a journey, however, from which one of the two travellers quickly turned back. Gambetta fell from power, and his successor, with his eyes nervously turned towards the German frontier, refused to have anything to do with Egypt. Once again, Gladstone went the round of the Powers, inviting co-operation. It was in vain ; England had to go forward alone. The naval squadron bombarded Alexandria. General Wolseley landed with a British force and crushed the insurgents at Tel-el-Kebir (1882). Their leader, Arabi Pasha, was deported to Ceylon.

Such was the beginning of the British control of Egypt which, under the skilful management of Sir Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer, was to produce such memorable results. The government at home were, for many years to come, unwilling to face, or unable to see, the realities of the situation. Again and again we asserted our intention to withdraw from Egypt almost immediately, to withdraw as soon as the necessary reforms had been carried out. Not till many years afterwards, when England, under other leaders than Gladstone, had acquired a more " imperial " frame of mind, was it openly admitted that the work of reform involved the political education of a whole people and could not be completed until a new generation had arisen in Egypt.

But behind Egypt lay the vast, and at that date largely uncharted, province of the Soudan, conquered by the Egyptian Khedives sixty years before, and abominably misgoverned ever since. The same year (1881) which saw Arabi Pasha rising against European control of Egypt, saw a much more picturesque and formidable leader of revolt raise his standard against Egyptian control of the Soudan. With the Mahdi's claim to be a special emissary of Allah we are not called upon to deal, but, on the merely political level, if the claims of a nationalist rebel are valid in proportion to the wrongs suffered by his people, then the Mahdi's case was a very strong one. Gladstone was much ridiculed for describing the Soudanese savages as "a people rightly struggling to be free." No doubt the Soudanese have, since the British conquest in 1898, been much better off under British rule than they could be under any government that the Mahdi might provide for them. But they had every right to prefer the self-inflicted anarchies of Mahdiism to the outrageous slave-driving of Egypt.

In 1883 the Egyptian government decided to attempt the conquest of the Mahdi, and a retired English officer, Colonel Hicks, accepted the command of a miserable Egyptian rabble which was despatched up the Nile. Hicks and his army were utterly destroyed at El Obeid in November. It is generally held to-day that Gladstone's government should have forbidden this expedition, but the view taken at the time was that such an action would have been an extension of our authority over the Egyptian government, which we were exceedingly anxious to limit.

It was now agreed that the Soudan must be abandoned. There were, however, various Egyptian garrisons at Khartoum and other points in the Soudan, and the British government decided to despatch a British officer to conduct the evacuation. The officer chosen was General Gordon. Gordon was, with the possible exception of Garibaldi, the most romantic figure of the nineteenth century. Twenty

years before he had performed incredible feats in suppressing the Tai-ping rebellion in China, and since then he had, for five years (1874-1879), been Governor-General of the Soudan under the Egyptian government, where he had done much to establish order and suppress the slave trade. The man himself was, if anything, more impressive than his works; he was a religious mystic, and a befriender of the children of the slums. He was, in short, as Gladstone said, "a hero of heroes." It was at one time generally supposed that the choice of Gordon was more or less forced upon the government by an agitation in *The Pall-Mall Gazette*, at that date a very influential paper, but there is some reason for thinking that an important group in governing circles had already determined on Gordon, and it is possible that the articles in *The Pall-Mall Gazette* were, as we now say, "officially inspired."[1] In many respects Gordon was, or seemed, an admirable man for the post; he knew the country, he possessed all the qualities of a leader, and he expressed most emphatic agreement with the government's policy of evacuation. His shortcomings, unhappily, proved, in the event, even more conspicuous than his merits. He was a born adventurer, unaccustomed to serving under authority, a man of vehement temper and constantly changing opinions, and one to whom the very notion of evacuation and retreat was likely to prove repellant as soon as he found himself once again on the scene of his former labours.

Gordon left England on January 18, 1884; he was killed at his post in Khartoum on January 26, 1885. The story of that year is one of the most dramatic and, in its details, one of the most controversial in recent history;[2] but the essential point is simple enough. Gordon, sent out to evacuate, tore

[1] See Lytton Strachey's biography of Gordon in *Eminent Victorians*.

[2] The reader who wishes to study it from its various aspects should read the relevant chapters in Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire* (*i.e.* Hartington), Gwynn and Tuckwell's *Life of Sir C. Dilke*, and Gordon's *Journals*; also the brilliant narrative in Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*.

up his instructions, announced a policy of "smashing the Mahdi," and wrote home for armed assistance. The situation that then arose (February 1884) is stated plainly enough by Sir Charles Dilke, one of the ablest and most level-headed members of the Cabinet. "Gordon at Khartoum," he writes, "was entirely outside our reach, and openly told us that he should not obey our orders when he did not choose to do so. From this moment we had only to please ourselves as to whether we should disavow him, and say that he was definitely acting in defiance of our instructions and must be left to his fate, or whether we should send an expedition to get him out. Doubtless "we" wavered between these two opinions. Mr. Gladstone, from the first moment that Gordon broke his orders, was for the former view. Lord Hartington, from the first moment, was for the latter. Chamberlain and I supported Hartington . . . many members of the Cabinet went backwards and forwards in their opinion." And Dilke goes on to point out that both parties in the Commons were similarly divided and irresolute. The general public, however, headed by the Queen, were for Gordon and against Gladstone from the start. As Mr. Gretton says in his excellent history, "they had in their simple view pitted Gordon against the Mahdi"; on one side was "England," on the other England's enemies.

To complete the story :—gradually, as the year advanced, Gordon's situation became more critical ; evacuation became impossible, even if Gordon had been willing to carry it out, and the Hartington party gained strength within the Cabinet. The question of sending or not sending a relief expedition was complicated by the disagreement of the military authorities on the comparative merits of the Nile route and the Red Sea route. At last the former was accepted, and the expedition decreed in August. Wolseley opened his campaign on the southern frontier of Egypt on October 5. The advance column of the relief arrived two days too late. Khartoum had fallen.

Many of the critics of Gladstone's conduct in the affair of General Gordon have made negligence the chief item in their charge against him. Gladstone, it is said, was old ; he was too much wrapped up in Ireland, and in the debates of the House of Commons ; he disliked the Soudanese question and consequently shirked it. This statement of the case will not bear examination. Gladstone took a strong line, and held to it doggedly ; he opposed the military expedition for Gordon's relief as long as he possibly could, and when he gave way, he gave way against his own judgment. Five years later he expressed as his considered judgment, " My own opinion is that it is harder to justify our doing so much to rescue him, than our not doing more."

Gladstone's policy, then, was to leave Gordon to his own resources. How should such a policy be judged ? To begin with, Gladstone felt, much more keenly and consistently than most statesmen, the horror and the evil of war. He was not by any means an unconditional pacifist, as his career proves, but he felt that to justify a war the cause must be very weighty. What was the cause in the present case ? In order to rescue two Englishmen [1] and an Egyptian garrison, some hundreds of English soldiers and some thousands of Dervish enemies were to be killed, and all the hatred and malice of warlike passion roused at home. The sacrifice, he held, was not justified by the end in view. Again, was it certain, was it even likely, that Gordon would consent to be "rescued"? He had broken faith with the government that sent him out, he had refused to evacuate when evacuation was still possible, and now he and his backers in the Cabinet were trying to force Gladstone's hand. Perhaps the upshot of a successful expedition would be a reconquest of the Soudan, which would load Egypt with an intolerable responsibility, and indefinitely retard the return of that country to economic solvency. Gladstone, in fact, did not regard the sacrifice of Gordon, if it came to a sacrifice, as the worst of all possible

[1] Colonel Stewart was with Gordon in Khartoum.

evils. Such a policy was bound to appear cold-blooded, and to be intensely unpopular ; but it is not so certain that it was wrong.

Thus the first five years of Gladstone's second government passed away. The record of English domestic legislation is meagre and uninteresting. Only one measure needs consideration, the Third Reform Bill.

The House of Commons, as constituted in the Middle Ages, had been designed to give separate representation to two distinct classes ; Knights of the Shire were elected by the landed gentry of each county, and Burgesses by the citizens of each town. One quarter of the House represented the minor aristocracy, and the remaining three-quarters the urban middle classes. Remnants of this tradition still survived into the early eighties, for both the first and the second Reform Bills (1832 and 1867) had imposed a higher franchise qualification for county than for town constituencies. After 1867 the wage-earner who lived in a fair sized town had a vote, but if he lived in a small town or a country village he was voteless. The purpose of the County Franchise Bill of 1884 was to give the vote to the country labourer, thus abolishing the ancient distinction between town and country franchises. Both the previous Reform Bills had combined in a single measure a reform of the franchise and a redistribution of seats. Gladstone's government preferred to take these two subjects in separate bills in consecutive years. Herein the House of Lords thought it saw an opportunity to trip the Liberal leader, and rejected the Franchise Bill on the ground that the Redistribution Bill had not yet been produced.

The whole question at issue between the Houses appears trivial enough to-day ; its interest is the evidence it offers of Gladstone's attitude to the hereditary chamber. Now, if ever, he could, if so minded, have raised the cry of " the People *versus* the Lords," and anticipated the campaign of Mr. Asquith and Mr. Lloyd George in 1910. The phrase

about " mending or ending " the House of Lords was, in fact, heard for the first time at this date. Gladstone, however, strained every nerve to damp down excitement and reach a compromise, by means of which the Lords could retreat with dignity from the position they had taken up. The Queen eagerly seconded his efforts ; the Tory leaders had afternoon tea with Gladstone in Downing Street, and were invited to inspect and criticise the Redistribution Bill before its introduction in the House of Commons ; in fact, sufficient oil was poured upon the waters of controversy, and the two bills reached port together in safety.

In one last excitement of this troublous period, Providence dealt Gladstone a hand full of trump cards, and they were not wasted upon that experienced player. Russia was advancing south-eastwards through Asia, and it had become necessary to appoint a Russo-British commission to mark out the frontier between Russia and Afghanistan, with which state Gladstone's government had succeeded in re-establishing friendly relations. While the commission was at work, Russian troops came in contact with, and defeated, Afghan troops at Penjdeh (March 1885). At once an alarm of war arose. Gladstone immediately proposed a vote of credit to cover the expenses of military preparations, in a speech which won the combined applause of the Radicals, who hated war, and of the Tories, who hated the speaker.[1] The alarm subsided almost as rapidly as it had arisen, but it proved a godsend to the Liberal party. The tragic figure of Gordon receded into the background of popular memory, and the accusation that Gladstone was indifferent to the honour of the Empire ceased to be a good party cry for the Tories.

(v) HOME RULE (1885-1894)

Ever since the Phoenix Park murders, in 1882, the government of Ireland had been conducted on a system of coercion

[1] The epigram is from Mr. Winston Churchill's *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*.

which suspended a variety of the personal liberties enjoyed by subjects of the Crown in this more fortunate island. The Crimes Act, which enacted this suspension of liberties, was due to expire in August 1885. Should it be replaced by another act of similar character? or was there not a better way? Was it not possible to secure order in Ireland by granting, in some form, the nationalist demands of the Irish people? On this question both parties were becoming divided, and several important politicians on both sides of the House were beginning to speculate upon the subject of concessions to Parnell. "Home Rule" was in itself a sufficiently vague term. There were times when Parnell stated Ireland's demand as something indistinguishable from complete independence. That was, of course, entirely out of the question. But would Ireland be satisfied with a system of elective County Councils for local government? Or would it be better, as both Gladstone and Chamberlain would have preferred, to supplement the County Councils with a Central Board, elected by the County Councils, and providing also special representation for property-owners? Again, should a Land Purchase Bill be introduced? On all these questions, the renewal of coercion, land purchase, and local self-government, Gladstone's Cabinet was hopelessly divided. They therefore committed political suicide by allowing themselves to be defeated on a clause of the Budget (June 1885), and passed on the problem to the Conservatives.

It happened to be impossible to hold an immediate general election, as the new register of voters under the recent Reform Bill was not yet ready. Lord Salisbury therefore undertook to carry on the government in the existing parliament till the end of the session, with an informal understanding that the Liberal majority would not obstruct the necessary routine of business.[1]

It quickly appeared that the Conservative leaders were

[1] The so-called "Government of Caretakers," June 1885 to January 1886.

quite as deeply tainted with the new friendliness towards Irish Nationalism as were the Liberals. Coercion was dropped, and the new Viceroy, Lord Carnarvon, delivered a speech in the House of Lords in which he suggested that a "satisfactory solution" was "not hopeless," and that there seemed no insuperable reason why English and Irish in the British Isles should not live "in unity and amity" as they did "in English colonies across the sea." Here was nothing definite; very much the reverse, indeed. But ordinary readers of the speech could not help connecting this reference to the colonies with some idea of local self-government, such as, during the previous half-century, had reconciled the colonies to British rule. In the following month Lord Carnarvon had a private interview with Parnell, from which Parnell declared he had got the impression—wrongly, said Lord Carnarvon—that the Conservative government intended to offer Ireland a parliament with full control over taxation. In October Lord Salisbury himself made a speech at Newport in which he indicated with great caution that "a large central authority" might be a less dangerous experiment than local governing bodies in a country where it was above all things necessary to protect a minority against the tyranny of the majority.

Gladstone's allusions to the question were equally vague. More vague than those of the Conservatives they were not, and could not possibly have been; and this is worth insisting on, for in after days Gladstone's enemies spoke as if he had had, at this time, a monopoly of the policy of watching for the jumping cat. On one point, however, he was perfectly definite. Speaking in Midlothian in November, he said: "It will be a vital danger to the country and the empire if, at a time when a demand from Ireland for larger powers of self-government is to be dealt with, there is not in parliament a party totally independent of the Irish vote." This utterance helped to decide Parnell's course, and he directed his Irish followers in English constituencies to vote for the

Conservatives. He hoped to secure as equal a balance of parties as possible and to put his support up to auction. Here he made a bad mistake of tactics.

To sum up the situation; both groups of leaders longed to find a way out of coercion; both knew that the only way out was some form of Irish self-government; on both sides some were prepared to adopt this course and some were not; both knew that to adopt "Home Rule" in any form might split their own party, and therefore preferred to stand by and see the other side take the fatal plunge.

In these circumstances it was impossible to fight the election on the Irish issue, and the topics most prominently advertised to the electorate were the competing programmes of domestic reform associated with Chamberlain on one side and Lord Randolph Churchill on the other. These programmes need not be described, as they scarcely concern the career of Gladstone. The result of the polls was the return of 333 Liberals, 251 Conservatives, and 86 Irish Nationalists. The Liberals were, therefore, five votes short of a majority over Conservatives and Nationalists combined.

The last of these three figures, the Nationalist vote, converted Gladstone to Home Rule. The Irish result was, indeed, the most portentous in the whole history of parliamentary elections. In the previous parliament the Nationalists had numbered 61. They had now conquered every seat in Ireland outside Ulster and the Protestant University in Dublin. In most constituencies the Nationalist majorities had been absolutely overwhelming—10,000 to 200, 4000 to 170, and so on. Here, it seemed to Gladstone, was the authentic and irreversible verdict of a nation. And so he turned to the Tories with a proposal which may well appear wiser to-day than it appeared to its recipients at the time. Both parties had taken, up to the election, almost identical ground on the Irish problem. Why should they not continue to move forward together? Three of the greatest legislative revolutions of the century, Catholic

Emancipation, the Repeal of the Corn Law, and the Second Reform Bill, had been carried by the co-operation of both parties. Ought not Home Rule to be added to the list of such achievements? Such a coalition alone would be above suspicion of truckling to the Irish vote. Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister. Let him introduce a bill with the assurance of Liberal support. We, who have seen, thirty-five years later, a so-called Unionist-Conservative party supporting a Bill to give Ireland more extensive powers than any politician dreamed of in 1886, may well regret that the proposal was not accepted.

But to Conservatives the precedents cited by Gladstone were not such as to make the proposal more attractive. When Peel repealed the Corn Law in 1846, he split his party and destroyed its power for a generation. When Disraeli introduced the Conservative Reform Bill of 1867, Gladstone, with his Liberal majority, had pounced upon it and turned it inside out. Who could tell what would happen in the House of Commons to a Conservative Home Rule Bill when once the Liberals and Nationalists, with their combined majority of 168, got hold of it? Again, what would the respectable back-bench Tory voter think of his leaders in such an event? Home Rule, in any case, was likely to be a bad speculation for the party that took it up; it was for the Liberals to pay the penalty that their majority entailed upon them. As soon as parliament met, the Conservative government announced a Coercion Act, and secured their defeat by a Liberal-Irish combination. The ominous fact was that eighteen Liberals, including Lord Hartington, voted with the Conservatives, and seventy-six abstained from voting altogether. The split in the Liberal party had begun.

Gladstone now formed his third government. Lord Hartington and several of the "Whig" wing refused to join; Mr. Chamberlain joined dubiously and on conditions, and very soon resigned; Lord Spencer, however, who by his

three years' experience as Viceroy must have known more about Ireland than all the rest of the Cabinet, remained with the Home Rulers. Mr. Morley, who had advocated Home Rule for several years past, became Irish Secretary.

The first of Home Rule Bills was submitted to the House of Commons in April. Details of a bill which was defeated, not on its details but on its general principles, can excite but a languid interest. Suffice it to say that the bill would have established an Irish parliament with two Houses, competent to deal with domestic affairs, but not with the control of customs duties, which were left to the Imperial Parliament. An Irish Cabinet was to be formed, responsible to the Irish parliament, and Ireland would henceforth be unrepresented at Westminster. A month later, on the debate for the second reading, Gladstone's old colleague, Lord Hartington, moved the rejection of the bill. Recent events had been such as to incline waverers to the Unionist side. Parnell had indicated that in certain particulars the bill did not go far enough for him, and that he proposed to fight for its enlargement in the committee stage. Above all, Lord Randolph Churchill, the popular demagogue of the Conservative party, was stirring Ulster to rebellion. The ominous threat, "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right," was reminding many that the problem of Ireland could not be solved merely by accepting the policy of the largest Irish party. The bill was defeated on the second reading by thirty votes, ninety-three Liberal-Unionists voting with the majority. These, like the Peelites of forty years before, gradually drifted across in the course of the next few years and became absorbed in the Conservative party.

Gladstone at once dissolved, and the general election that followed returned a Unionist majority in Great Britain (*i.e.* excluding Ireland) of 178. The Irish vote remained absolutely unchanged.

The Unionists were now in power and were likely to remain there for six years, the normal life-time of a nineteenth

century parliament.[1] But Gladstone had found what he believed to be the solution of the Irish problem, and, in the hope that his countrymen might allow him to apply that solution, he renounced all prospect of a leisured evening to his long day's work, and determined to remain in public life so long as strength held out. If he could not carry Home Rule at the age of seventy-six, he must try again at the age of eighty-three. It was for Home Rule alone that he remained in public life, and so long as he remained Liberalism perforce could mean little more than Home Rule. For England herself Liberalism had no longer any distinctive message, a disastrous fact for the party, particularly as the years now opening saw a revival of industrial unrest and socialist propaganda on a greater scale than at any time since the days of the Chartists. It was the period of Hyndman and William Morris, the Fabian Society and the great Dock Strike. To some even of Gladstone's most devoted colleagues it seemed, in moments of despondency, that the Liberal party and the Liberal leader, indissolubly united, were approaching the grave together. Mr. Morley is reported as saying in 1892: "There is an old Indian idea that, when a great chief dies, his friends and horses and dogs should be buried with him. So it must be with us!" (*Private Diaries of Sir A. West*, p. 96.) And the Liberal party did, in fact, suffer something like death at the end of the nineteenth century, followed by resurrection in the early years of the twentieth.

Once in power the Unionists revived coercion, and began, under Mr. Balfour's firm leadership, that twenty years[2] of "resolute government" which was to be the alternative to self-government. In so far as the Irish legislation carried during these years was intended to improve the social and economic condition of the country, it was eminently success-

[1] Seven years were legally possible, but custom had decided in favour of six; law has since (1911) reduced it to five.

[2] 1886-1905, omitting 1892-1895.

ful; in so far as it was intended to satisfy the Irish demand, it was a complete failure. It was a policy of offering a five pound note to a grown-up son who has asked for a latch-key.

The Times newspaper, hitherto celebrated for its balanced impartiality, had now become a strong Unionist organ, and sought to serve its political friends by publishing a series of articles on "Parnellism and Crime," in the course of which it printed in facsimile a letter, purporting to be written by Parnell, expressing sympathy with the Phoenix Park murders. Now, thought the sturdy British patriot, we have got the truth about Gladstone's ally at last! But indeed it was not the truth that *The Times* had presented to the public. Two years after the publication of the letter, the forger was unmasked in cross-examination before the Special Commission appointed by the government to investigate the charges made in *The Times'* articles. Public opinion seldom moves by strictly logical processes, and the fact that Parnell had been the victim of an atrocious fraud inclined many to think that Home Rule was perhaps likely, after all, to provide a successful solution of the Irish problem.

This was in 1889. Only a year later came a second Parnell sensation, which reversed the favourable results of the first. Parnell was made a co-respondent in the Divorce Court. In most countries and in most periods of history a matrimonial irregularity of this kind would, rightly or wrongly, be regarded as a fact wholly irrelevant to a statesman's public life. But the Irish Catholics, on whose support Parnell wholly depended, and the English Nonconformists, on whose support the English Liberals very largely relied, were certain to take a very different view of the matter. Had Parnell been a greater patriot than he was, he would have recognised that the only service he could now render his cause was to withdraw from its leadership. Instead, with insane obstinacy, he determined to cling to his post and flout the public opinion on which his political existence depended. Gladstone therefore had to intervene, and to

indicate that, on grounds of political expediency, the Liberal party could not act in concert with the Irish Nationalists, so long as Parnell led them. Thus the Irish party was split in twain, and, though Parnell died a few months later, the miserable wrangles of Parnellites and anti-Parnellites broke the unity of the Irish party till after the end of Gladstone's career.

At last, in 1892, Gladstone's fifteenth and last general election became due. It proved the most half-hearted and depressing of the series. England was tired of coercion, but she was not converted to Home Rule. The result of the polls left the Liberals, *plus* the Irish Nationalists, forty seats ahead of the Unionists, but thirty seats behind them on the vote of the larger island alone.[1] Such a victory was scarcely better than a defeat. The Liberals could form a government and carry a Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons, but the House of Lords would certainly reject it, and would be entirely justified in rejecting a bill which had not behind it a majority in each of the islands whose relationship it proposed to alter. By similar reasoning it could be argued that the Lords had a right to reject any legislation for Great Britain, seeing that the government was a minority government so far as Great Britain was concerned.

The stage was set, in fact, for a dismal anti-climax as the last scene of that vast career; an inadequate majority, and an unusually quarrelsome cabinet, many members of which were suspected of being lukewarm in their assent to the one great article of the leader's creed. But Gladstone rose superior to it all. The session of 1893 was the longest in the history of parliament, and, in spite of a growing deafness and blindness, the old man of eighty-three never flagged in an unsurpassable exhibition of the parliamentary art. The Second Home Rule Bill itself need hardly detain us. Its

[1] To get this result it is necessary, of course, to subtract not only the Irish Nationalists from the Gladstonian total, but also the Ulster Unionists from the opposition total.

chief new feature, as compared with the bill of 1886, was the retention of forty Irish members at Westminster. The presence or absence of Irish members at Westminster was, indeed, one of the insoluble dilemmas of any Home Rule scheme which gave Ireland only partial control of her own affairs. If there were no Irish members at Westminster (as in the 1886 bill), then Ireland would be unrepresented in decisions on the Irish topics that the bill reserved for the Imperial parliament. If, on the other hand, Irish representation at Westminster was retained, then the Irish vote would influence decisions concerning Great Britain alone. The compromise of 1893 which retained an Irish representation, reduced to two-fifths of its former strength, was open to criticism from both sides at once. It was under-representation on Irish topics, over-representation on non-Irish.

When the work of the Commons was over, the Lords rejected the bill with almost savage energy. In spite of the fact that the shooting season was in full swing, 419 peers put in an appearance to record their votes against the handful of forty-one supporters. Of the rest of the work of the session not a single bill survived intact. All were either rejected or drastically amended. Gladstone's last speech in the House of Commons was a vigorous attack upon the House of Lords. Again and again in the past he had worked successfully for compromise between the two Houses. The strong strain of Conservatism in his nature had shrunk from laying violent hands upon that august survival of the feudal system. Now he told it in no uncertain tones that its day of reckoning with the forces of democracy was close upon it. But, of course, their lordships did not believe him.

The next day after this speech he spent packing his papers at Downing Street, and working at his translation of Horace. The day after, he had his final audience with the Queen, who pointedly refrained from any expression of esteem for his services to his country. The end had come at last.

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During the later stages of his career, in fact, ever since the Midlothian campaign of 1879, the position occupied by Gladstone in the public mind had been growing more and more extraordinary. To all alike he seemed scarcely a mortal man, but, in Aristotle's phrase, either a god or a beast. His followers reverenced him as the G.O.M., the Grand Old Man, and, during his journeys about the country, crowds did obeisance before him as before a royal personage. To his enemies, on the other hand, he was the incarnation of evil, a being who simply would not die and leave the world in peace, one who, with the name of God always on his lips, had sold himself to the Devil, and with the assistance of this ally (who had recently walked the earth in the guise of Parnell) was compassing the disruption of the British Empire. One tasteless humorist had discovered that the magic letters G.O.M. stood, when reversed, for "Murderer of Gordon."

But when he died in 1898, four years later, passions had died down, and Englishmen were able to realise that one of the greatest figures in their history had passed from among them. If they had not realised it for themselves, the astonishing tribute of admiration from every country in the world would have taught it them. He was the Grand Old Man, after all, not merely of the Liberal party, but of Victorian politics. By a decision that had no precedent in our history, the body was laid in state in Westminster Hall, and, during two days, a quarter of a million persons visited the scene.

Of all the tributes spoken or written during the days that followed Gladstone's death, none went nearer to the heart of the matter than those of two of his most distinguished political opponents, Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, the Conservative leaders in the two Houses of Parliament. Speaking in the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury said: "What he sought was the attainment of great ideals, and, whether they were based on sound convictions or not, they could have issued from nothing but the soundest and purest

moral aspirations. . . . He will leave behind him the memory of a great Christian statesman." Speaking on the same occasion in the House of Commons, Mr. Balfour described him as "the greatest member of the greatest deliberative assembly that the world has seen." He added: "He brought to our debates a genius which compelled attention, he raised in the public estimation the whole level of our proceedings, and they will be the most ready to admit the value of his service who realise how much of public prosperity is involved in the maintenance of the worth of public life, and how perilously difficult most democracies feel it to be to avoid the opposite dangers into which so many of them have fallen."

We may leave it at that. It was not given to Gladstone, as to most of the statesmen studied in this book, to preside over a constructive revolution in the affairs of his country. Of most of his measures it may be said that time had made their passage due, and that somehow or other they would in any case have been enacted by other leaders. The one constructive revolution in our system which he projected, he was not allowed to carry through. But his career offers an extraordinary combination of high Christian principle allied to exceptional political ingenuity. This book has hitherto avoided reference to events which are sufficiently recent to be still obscured by the dust raised by bitter controversy. But it may be suggested that the qualities of a Gladstone could have rendered untold service to the world in the year that followed the Armistice of 1918. When the Treaty came to be made it was found that, of the spokesmen of the two great English-speaking nations who bore a part in the making of that Treaty, one combined a fine grasp of the moral principles at issue with a singular incapacity for translating his principles into political action, whereas the other, with a political adroitness equalling that of Gladstone, lacked that steadying and directing power, which only a firm grasp of principles can give. In Gladstone the Olympian vision of

President Wilson and the Mercurial dexterity of Mr. Lloyd George were combined in one man. It is probable that he would not have been a good leader in the Great War; his attachment to liberty in all its forms was so intense that he might have shrunk too long from enforcing those curtailments of liberty that the war made necessary. But it is difficult to resist the thought that he would have been an ideal leader in the making of the Great Peace.

APPENDIX

The following short lists of books, though obviously inadequate for the professed student, may, by reason of their brevity, be of the more practical use to the ordinary reader.

PERICLES

1. A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*. (Oxford Press.)
   This is a brilliant study of the politics, economics, and social life of the Greek city states, and of Periclean Athens in particular; in fact, the best book available for the ordinary reader.
2. E. Abbott, *Life of Pericles*. (Putnam's "Heroes of the Nations.")
   A sound but not very inspiring book; underrates rather than overrates the "hero," which is unusual in biography.
3. J. B. Bury, *History of Greece*. (Macmillan.)
   The standard modern English text-book, valuable as a book of reference.
4. F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*. (Arnold.)
   The first four chapters give the most intelligible account known to me of the causes of the Peloponnesian War. (The title of the book refers to the author's theory that Thucydides unconsciously adapted his facts to fit them into the scheme of an Aeschylean tragedy.)

JULIUS CAESAR

1. W. Warde Fowler, *Julius Caesar*. (Putnam's "Heroes of the Nations.")
   An extremely good simple biography.

2. J. L. Strachan Davidson, *Cicero*. (Putnam's "Heroes of the Nations.")

   Also a good book, and, as it takes a somewhat unfavourable view of Caesar, a good companion volume to Warde Fowler's biography.

3. T. Mommsen, *History of Rome*. (Dent's "Everyman" Library.)

   Vol. IV. covers the period from the death of Sulla to the death of Caesar. Though it attributes almost superhuman wisdom to Caesar, and chastises his rivals with unmeasured contempt, it is brilliantly written, and will always remain one of the greatest of modern historical classics.

4. G. Ferrero, *The Greatness and Decline of Rome*. (Heinemann.)

   One of the more recent, and in many respects the most interesting, history of the period; continues to the death of Augustus, but the first two volumes, ending with the death of Caesar, are the most interesting to the ordinary reader.

CHARLEMAGNE

1. H. W. C. Davis, *Charlemagne*. (Putnam's "Heroes of the Nations.")

   A good biography.

2. T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*. (Oxford University Press.)

   The last two volumes of this long and eminently readable history (which covers the period from Alaric to Charlemagne), deal with the Franks, mainly in connection with Italy.

3. Lord Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*. (Macmillan.)

   This brilliant historical essay traces, in about five hundred pages, the whole history of the institution from Barbarian invasions to the time of Bismarck. The chapters on Charles are quite admirable. Indeed the book is one of those which it seems impertinent to praise.

4. GUIZOT, *History of Civilisation in France*. (Bell and Sons.)
   Though a hundred years old, these lectures are still not superseded. See, in particular, lectures XIX. to XXIII.

INNOCENT III

1. A. LUCHAIRE, *Innocent III*. (Hachette.)
   This excellent book has not been translated into English. It consists of six small volumes dealing in turn with the various activities of Innocent's career : (i) Italy, (ii) The Albigensian Heresy, (iii) The Empire, (iv) The Crusade, (v) The Monarchies, (vi) The Lateran Council.

2. A. L. SMITH, *Church and State in the Middle Ages*. (Oxford Press.)
   Six lectures, dealing with the period of Innocent IV. ; probably the best exposition, in general terms, of the greatness of the mediaeval Papacy and of the causes of its downfall.

3. K. I. M. BELL, *A Short History of the Papacy*. (Methuen.)
   A convenient and business-like text-book, tracing the history of the Papacy from first to last in 400 pages.

4. C. H. C. PIRIE-GORDON, *Innocent the Great*. (Longmans.)
   Apparently the only biography in English ; a brief, and somewhat eccentric, but amusing and readable, book.

RICHELIEU

1. H. O. WAKEMAN, *The Ascendancy of France*. (Rivingtons.)
   A good and readable text-book of European history from 1598 to 1715.

2. R. LODGE, *Richelieu*. (Macmillan.)
   The most convenient short biography in English.

3. J. N. FIGGIS, *From Gerson to Grotius*. (Cambridge Press.)
   A compact and learned outline of the development of political thought from the break-up of the Papal system to the period of the Thirty Years War.

WASHINGTON AND HAMILTON

1. Woodrow Wilson, *George Washington.* (Harpers.)

   A good short biography, popular and picturesque in style, and gaining additional interest from the fact that it is the work of one of the most notable of the first President's successors.

2. H. C. Lodge, *George Washington.* (Houghton Mifflin Co.)

   A longer life, by one of Wilson's political antagonists; very good on the later part of Washington's career, which Wilson dismisses briefly. On questions relating to England, Lodge's judgment is warped by his petulant antipathy to this country.

3. F. S. Oliver. *Life of Alexander Hamilton.* (Nelsons.)

   A very able and vigorous book; the writer adds a concluding section, in which he applies what he regards as the "lessons" of Hamilton's career to the problem of the federation of the British Empire, but these chapters do not affect the value of the rest of the book.

4. L. Curtis, *The Commonwealth of Nations.* (Macmillan.)

   The two long chapters on the quarrel with England and the American Union are exceedingly good.

5. Goldwin Smith, *The United States.* (The Macmillan Co.)

   A very good outline of American history.

6. C. Chesterton, *A History of the United States.* (Chatto and Windus.)

   A very readable book, but less sound in its judgments, in my opinion, than the work of Goldwin Smith.

   The last three books mentioned treat the same subjects from such divergent standpoints as to be well worth careful comparison.

NAPOLEON

1. Madelin, *The French Revolution.* (Heinemann.)

   This is much the best general history of the Revolution, being brilliantly written, and based on the most modern

research. The same writer promises a second volume on *The Consulate and Empire*.

2. J. H. Rose, *Life of Napoleon*. (Bell.)
   This is the standard English biography ; it is a work of great learning and scrupulous fairness of judgment.

3. A. Vandal, *L'Avènement de Bonaparte*. (Nelson.)
   An extremely brilliant book, describing in great detail the most important year of Napoleon's life, namely that which began with the *coup d'état* of Brumaire.

4. H. A. L. Fisher, *Bonapartism*. (Oxford Press.)
   Six lectures, the first three of which are devoted to the first Napoleon, dealing with general aspects in a very illuminating manner.

5. C. A. Fyffe, *Modern Europe* (1792-1878). (Cassells.)
   Perhaps the best, and certainly the most readable, of the numerous text-books of modern European history.

BISMARCK

1. J. W. Headlam, *Bismarck*. (Putnam's "Heroes of the Nations.")
   An excellent biography ; the story is told with admirable clearness and simplicity.

2. C. Grant Robertson, *Bismarck*. (Constable.)
   A more ambitious biography, which will be best appreciated by those who have a fair knowledge of the period in general. It is particularly valuable on the foreign policy after 1870, which Headlam dismisses very briefly.

3. Bismarck, *Reflections and Reminiscences*, 2 vols. (Smith Elder.)
   A retrospect written in old age, affording abundant insight into character. The book is well translated. A further volume has been recently published by Hodder & Stoughton, containing Bismarck's reminiscences of William II., which were omitted from the first publication.

4. Lord Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*. (Macmillan.)
   Apart from the merits of the book as a general sketch of

important aspects of German history, the final chapters on the New German Empire are of value as the views of an eminent English Liberal writing shortly after 1870.

5. J. H. Rose, *The Development of European Nations*, 1870-1914. (Constable.)

An excellent general history, which serves as a continuation of Fyffe's book mentioned in the previous bibliography.

GLADSTONE

1. Lord Morley, *Life of Gladstone*. (Macmillan & Co.)

A fine specimen of the "standard" biography, and, though long, it is not diffuse, owing to the immense length of the career it records. The detail provided enables the reader to study the actual working of Cabinet government as no short biography can do.

2. G. M. Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century*. (Longmans.)

This is perhaps the best of the numerous short and general histories of the period.

3. Herbert Paul, *A Modern History of England*. (Macmillan and Co.)

A very well-written detailed history, in five volumes, of the period 1845-1895. It is generally Gladstonian in its sympathies, slightly hostile to Disraeli, and absurdly prejudiced against Napoleon III.

4. R. H. Gretton, *A Modern History of the English People*, 1880-1910. (Grant Richards.)

An admirable and very lively book; rather critical in its attitude to Gladstone.

INDEX

Aberdeen, Lord, 353, 354, 355, 358, 363.
Adams, John, 215.
Adams, Samuel, 183.
Aemilius Paulus, 32.
Aeschylus, 5.
Agricola, 57.
Alabama, The, 371.
Alaric, 81.
Albert, Prince Consort, 303, 306, 368.
Albert of Hohenzollern, 274.
Albigensian Heresy, The, 124, 132, 133.
Alcuin, 93, 94, 96.
Alexander the Great, 256, 260.
Alexander III., Pope, 112.
Alexander I. of Russia, 261, 262, 265, 279, 330.
Alexander II. of Russia, 294, 328, 330.
Alexis III., Emperor, 128, 130.
Alexis IV., Emperor, 128, 129, 130.
Alfred the Great, 90.
Alsace, *see* Lorraine.
American Colonies, of England, origin, 173; description of, 176; separatism, 177; mercantile system, 178; their political outlook, 179; refusal to pay Stamp Act, 182; character of American Revolution, 184; Declaration of Independence, 185; *see also under* United States.
Amherst, Sir Jeffery, 181.
Amiens, Treaty of, 249.
Anaxagoras, 25.
Anne of Austria, 166.
Antony, Mark, character, and use of Caesar's will, 72; Second Triumvirate, 73; his adoption of Caesar's foreign policy, 73; relations with Cleopatra, 74; defeat and death, 75.
Arabi Pasha, 331, 392.
Archidamus, 22.
Ariovistus, 54.
Aristides, 13.
Aristophanes, 5.
Aristotle, 408.
Arminius, 270.
Arndt, E. M., 279, 287.
Arnold, Benedict, 193.
Arnold, Matthew, on Prussia, 17; on Oxford, 363.
Arnold, Dr. T., 345.
Aspasia, 25.
Asquith, H. H., 344.
Athens, situation and population, 6; democracy in, 7-11; empire of, compared with British Empire, 12; limitation of citizenship, 13; imports and exports, 16; war with Sparta, 458-445 B.C., 18; western policy, 19; persecution of free thought, 25; parties during Peloponnesian War, 26; *see also under* Pericles.
Atticus, M. Pomponius, 46.
Attila, 128.
Augereau, Marshal, 237.
Augsburg, Treaty of, 145, 155.
Augustenburg, Frederick of, 305, 306.
Augustine, St., 82, 93.

Augustus, Emperor, contrasted with Julius Caesar, 71; Second Triumvirate, 73; attitude to his position after Actium, 75, 79.
Aurelius, Marcus, 81.
Avars, The, 88.
Avignon, Papacy at, 138.

Bacon, Francis, 140.
Balbus, T. Cornelius, 53, 68.
Balfour, A. J., Irish Secretary, 404; quoted on Gladstone, 409.
Baring, Sir Evelyn, 392.
Barras, Paul, 233.
Becket, Archbishop, 113, 122, 136.
Belloc, H., quoted on Middle Ages, 104; on 'Servile State,' 325.
Benedetti, V., 311, 317.
Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, 164.
Bernhardi, General von, 339.
Berthier, Marshall, 248.
Bibulus, Marcus, 49.
Bismarck, Count Herbert, 334.
Bismarck, Otto von, Prince, family and early life, 284; conservatism, 286; attitude to revolution of 1848, 287, 289; to Convention of Olmütz, 291; at Frankfort, 292, 295-298; at St. Petersburg, 298; appointed Minister-President, 300; Polish crisis, 302; Schleswig-Holstein question, 303-308; proposes a German parliament with manhood suffrage, 308; Austrian war, 309, 310; negotiations with Napoleon after Königgrätz, 310, 311; conciliates Liberals, 312; constitution of North-German Confederation, 312, 313; the Spanish candidature, 315; Franco-German war, 318; acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine, 319, 332; German Empire, 320; the *Kulturkampf*, 322; struggle with Socialists, 324; collectivist policy, 325; *entente* of the Three Emperors, 327; Congress of Berlin, 329; Dual Alliance, 329; Reinsurance Treaty, 330; Triple Alliance, 331; colonial policy, 331; Poland and Alsace, 332; relations with William I., 333; retirement and death, 335; degree of his responsibility for the Great War, 336-341; *also referred to*, 147, 148, 159, 171, 194, 272, 371.
Bonaparte, Jerome, 264.
Bonaparte, Joseph, 262.
Bonaparte, Louis, 263.
Bonaparte, Lucien, 264.
Bonaparte, Napoleon, *see under* Napoleon.
Boniface, St., 84.
Boniface VIII., Pope, 137.
Boswell, James, 345.
Braddock, General, 188.
Bradlaugh, Charles, 380.
Brandenburg, origin and early history, 274, 275; *see* Prussia.
Bright, John, 352, 359, 370.
Brougham, Lord, 363.
Brutus, Decimus, 56.
Brutus, Marcus, 69, 248.
Bryce, Lord, 43.
Buckingham, Duke of, 151.
Burghley, Lord, 267.
Burke, Edmund, 57; quoted on American colonies, 184; 354, 375, 381.
Burke, Irish Assistant Secretary, 385.
Burr, Aaron, 216.
Butt, Isaac, 382.

Cadoudal, Georges, 246, 254.
Caesar, C. Julius, problems confronting him, 40; family, 40; stages in his career, 41; alliance with Crassus, and aedileship, 45; association with Catiline, 46; First Triumvirate and consulship, 47; secures Cicero's exile, 49; his attitude to the Gallic war, 50; conquest of Gaul, 54-59; at Lucca, 56; writes *De Bello Gallico*, 59; crosses the Rubicon, 61; chronology of the Civil War, 64; relations with Cleopatra, 65; his work of reconstruction,

67; cause of his assassination; contrasted with Augustus, 71, 76; *otherwise mentioned*, 8, 79, 80, 83, 87, 104, 131, 138, 211, 235, 248, 256, 260, 270.
Cairns, Lord, 368.
Calder, Sir R., 261.
Calender, French Revolutionary, 230.
Calixtus II., Pope, 124.
Calvin, John, 141, 155.
Cambacérès, Second Consul, 244, 246, 251.
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., quoted, 244.
Canning, G., 210, 344.
Canossa, 111, 323.
Canute, 273.
Carlyle, on Prussia, 17, 260, 275.
Carnarvon, Lord, 400.
Carnot, General, 229, 235, 237.
Cassius, C., 69.
Catharism, 132, 133.
Catherine de Medicis, 145.
Catiline, L. Sergius, 45.
Cato, M. Portius, votes for death of Catilinarian conspirators, 46; attacks Caesar's cruelty in Gaul, 56; character of, 62; suicide at Utica, 64.
Cavendish, Lord F., 384.
Cavour, Count, 148, 295, 300, 321, 354.
Chamberlain, Joseph, 378, 395, 399, 402.
Charles the Great, barbarism of his period, 80; becomes King of the Franks, 85; invades Italy, 85; his nationality, 86; Saxon wars, 87; other military activities, 88; relations with the Papacy, 89, 95-98; imperial coronation, 95; extent of his empire, and foreign relations, 90; methods of government, 91; attitude to learning, 93; his policy towards Constantinople, 96; his Erastianism, 97; fate of his Empire, 98; *otherwise mentioned*, 105, 138, 255, 260, 270.
Charles the Fat, Emperor, 100.
Charles IV., Emperor, 272.
Charles V., Emperor, 144, 145, 272, 273, 282.
Charles I. of England, 148, 150, 165, 168, 175, 179, 186, 226, 302.
Charles II. of England, 167, 179.
Charles VIII. of France, 144.
Charles XII. of Sweden, 162.
Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, 156.
Charles Martel, 83, 84.
Christian of Glücksburg, 304.
Churchill, Lord R., 380, 401, 403.
Cicero, M. Tullius, prosecutes Verres, 43; unfitted for statesmanship, 43; opposes Caesar and Crassus, 45; Catilinarian conspiracy, 45; literary instinct, 46; exiled, 49; coerced at Lucca, 56; attacks Antony, 72, 73; death, 73; his modernity, 80.
Cimon, 5, 14, 18.
Cinna, L. Cornelius, 38.
Cleisthenes, 8.
Clemençeau, J., *quoted*, 339.
Cleon, 25.
Cleopatra, 65, 66, 74, 75, 256.
Clinton, General, 192.
Clodius, Publius, 49, 68.
Clovis, 84, 86.
Cobden, R., Anti-corn-law League, 352; treaty with France, 357; Crimean War, 359.
Colley, General, 389, 390.
Condé, Prince de, 166, 167.
Constance of Sicily, 115.
Constance, Council of, 124.
Constantine the Great, Emperor, 81.
Constantine VI., Emperor, 90.
Cook, Captain, 258.
Corcyra, 20.
Corinth, 17, 20, 31, 35.
Corneille, P., 154.
Cornwallis, Lord, 193.
Crassus, M., 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 56, 59.
Crimean War, 294, 296, 358-360.
Croesus, 3.
Cromwell, Oliver, 53, 66, 154, 163, 167, 179, 194, 285, 333, 369.

Crusades, The, First, 111, 125; Third, 125; Fourth, 126-132.
Curio, C., 61.
Cyrus, 2.

D'Aguesseau, Chancellor, 252.
Dandolo, Doge of Venice, 129.
Dante, 69, 116, 227.
Danton, J., 227, 228, 229, 235.
Darc, Jeanne, 144.
Decaen, General, 257.
Delos, Confederacy of, 4, 12.
D'Enghien, Duke, 255.
Derby, Lord, 353, 355, 362, 363.
Dicey, A. V., on nineteenth-century legislation, 378.
Dilke, Sir C., conversation with Bismarck, 335; *quoted* on Gordon, 395.
Diocletian, Emperor, 81.
Disraeli, B., on Bismarck, 300; supports Turkey in 1876, 328, 374; *quoted* on Gladstone, 344; attacks Peel, 352; Derby-Disraeli governments, 353, 355, 365; joins Gladstone in attacking Palmerston in 1850, 360; rivalry with Gladstone, 353, 363; Second Reform Bill, 366; legislates in favour of Trade Unions, 373; his last government, 374-376; South African policy, 387; Egyptian policy, 390.
Dominic, St., 134.
Ducos, Roger, 242.
Dumonricz, General, 228.

Edward I. of England, 138, 171.
Egbert, 90.
Eginhard, 93; *quoted* on coronation of Charles, 95.
Elizabeth, Queen, 267.
Ems Telegram, The, 317, 340.
Eugene, Prince, 168.
Euripides, 5.

Favre, Jules, 319.
Ferdinand I., Emperor, 157.
Ferdinand II., Emperor, 158, 161, 162.
Ferdinand of Aragon, 157.
Ferdinand of Bulgaria, 101.
Ferdinand of Naples, 293.
Ferrero, G., *quoted* of Caesar's attitude to the Gallic War, 52; on Caesar's work of reconstruction, 67.
Fichte, J. G., 279.
Fimbria, C., 38.
Flaccus, L., 38.
Forster, W. E., 370, 384.
Fouché, Joseph, 239, 240, 254.
France, birthday of, 59; in the ninth century, 99; relations with Innocent III., 118; gains from the Albigensian Crusade, 135; outline of history from Philip Augustus to Richelieu, 143-146; *see also* under Richelieu; her American colonies, 175; supports Washington against England, 192; *see also under* Revolution, French; and Napoleon; geographical character, 271; attitude to Germany after 1866, 314; recovery after 1870, 328; isolation of, by Bismarck's diplomacy, 331; *see also under* Napoleon III.
Francis Joseph of Austria, 287.
Franklin, B., 182.
Frankfort Parliament, 287, 288.
Franks, The, general character of their history, 86; *see also* Charles the Great.
Frederick I., Barbarossa, Emperor, 112, 125.
Frederick II., Emperor, 100, 116, 117, 137, 272.
Frederick I. of Prussia, 276.
Frederick II., the Great, of Prussia, 117, 222, 276-278, 324.
Frederick, German Emperor, 320, 334.
Frederick VII. of Denmark, 303.
Frederick of Nurenberg, 274.
Frederick, Elector Palatine, 159.
Frederick William, Great Elector, of Brandenburg, 275, 278.
Frederick William I. of Prussia, 276.
Frederick William II. of Prussia, 278.

Frederick William III. of Prussia, 278, 283.
Frederick William IV. of Prussia, 278, 284, 286, 287, 289, 290, 296, 298.
Frere, Sir B., 388, 390.

Gambetta, L., 331, 392.
Garibaldi, G., 295, 354.
Gaston of Orleans, 149, 166.
Gates, General, 191, 193.
Gaul, importance of Caesar's conquest of, 50; situation on Caesar's arrival, 54; Caesar's conquest, 54-59; *see also* France.
Genêt, Citoyen, 210.
George III. of England, 183, 194, 225.
George William of Brandenburg, 275.
Germany, birth of, 99, 100; relations with Innocent III., 116; Thirty Years' War, 158 *sqq.*; effects of Napoleonic conquest, 264; general character of history, 269-274; geographical character, 271; Treaty of Vienna, 281; German Revolution, 286-290; constitution of 1867, 312; *see also* Bismarck, etc.
Gladstone, W. E., character of his career, 343; early years, 345; religious views, 346, 347, 349; first parliamentary election, 347; first years in House of Commons, 348; member of Peel's 1841 government, 350; resigns on Maynooth question, 351; repeal of Corn Law, 352; Neapolitan prisons, 354; as Chancellor of the Exchequer, 355-358; Crimean War, 358; colleague of Palmerston, 360-363; Second Reform Bill, 363-367; 1868 election, 367; Irish Church Act, 368; first Irish Land Act, 369; Education Act, 369; Belgian and Black Sea crises, 370; Alabama question, 371; other legislation of his first government, 372; indifference to industrial questions, 373; pamphlet on Bulgaria, 375; Midlothian campaign, 376; difficulties of the 1880 government, 377-380; the Bradlaugh question, 380; Irish agitation, 381; second Land Act, and Irish land policy in general, 383-386; Majuba, 387-390; Egypt and the Soudan, 390-397; Third Reform Bill, 397; Penjdeh crisis, 398; Irish Home Rule problem, 399-402; first Home Rule Bill, 403; Parnell Commission, and Divorce, 405; Second Home Rule Bill, 406; retirement, 407; reputation and character, 408-410.
Gordon, General, 393-396, 398, 408.
Gracchus, Tiberius, 33.
Gracchus, Caius, 34, 48, 68.
Grace, W. G., 268.
Gregory the Great, Pope, 82.
Gregory III., Pope, 84.
Gregory VII., Pope, 103, 109, 110, 112, 127.
Grenville, G., 179, 182, 193.
Gustavus I., of Sweden, 162.
Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, 162, 163, 164.

Hadrian I., Pope, 89.
Hamilton, Alexander, quoted on lack of government, 195; early life, 198; partnership with Washington, 198; at Convention of Philadelphia, 200-202: his attitude to democracy, 201, 208; financial measures, 205; quarrel with Jefferson, 209; desires friendship with England, 212; his Spanish policy, 214; quarrel with Burr, and death, 216; his work tested by the Civil War, 218; *also mentioned*, 173, 241, 267.
Hampden, John, refuses to pay Ship money, 165; pseudo-Hampdens in America, 183; no Hampdens in Prussia, 301, 381.

Hannibal, 31.
Harcourt, General, 165.
Hardenberg, Count, 279.
Haroun-al-Raschid, 90.
Hartington, Lord, 377, 387, 395, 402, 403.
Hastings, Warren, 57.
Henry III., Emperor, 109, 129.
Henry IV., Emperor, 110, 111.
Henry V., Emperor, 112.
Henry VI., Emperor, 113, 115, 127.
Henry II. of England, 122, 135.
Henry VII. of England, 144.
Henry VIII. of England, 85, 136, 171.
Henry II. of France, 145.
Henry III. of France, 147.
Henry IV. of France, 146, 147.
Henry the Fowler, 274.
Henrietta Maria, 150.
Herodotus, 5, 16.
Hicks, Colonel, 393.
Hildebrand, *see* Gregory VII.
Hobbes, T., *quoted* on Papacy, 105.
Horace, 75, 407.
Howe, Sir W., 190, 193.
Huguenots, 145, 149-152, 160, 169, 175, 176.
Huss, J., 158.
Hyndman, W., 404.

Ingeborg of Denmark, 118.
Innocent I., Pope, 82.
Innocent III., Pope, fortunate moment of his accession, 114; relations with the city of Rome, 114; with Sicily, 115; with Germany, 116, 269; with France, 118; with England, 119; with Spanish kingdoms, 120; with the Church, 122; the Lateran Council, 124; the Fourth Crusade, 125-131; Albigensian heresy, 133; weakness of his authority, 135, 138.
Innocent IV., Pope, 137.
Ionian Islands, 362.
Ireland, the famine, 352; the Fenians, 367; Irish Church, 368; land problem and Land Acts, 369, 383-385; Universities Bill, 372; 1880 election, 376; leadership of Parnell, 382; Phoenix Park murders, 384; attitude of English parties to Home Rule, 399; 1885 elections, 401, 403.
Irene, Empress, 90, 97.
Isaac Angelus, Emperor, 127.
Isabella I. of Spain, 157.
Isabella II. of Spain, 315.
Isaiah, 1.
Ismail, Khedive, 390.

Jackson, Andrew, 217.
James I. of England, 159, 173.
Jay, J., 212, 213.
Jefferson, T., author of Declaration of Independence, 185; Secretary of State, 205; character, 207; contrasted with Washington and Hamilton, 208; foreign policy, 209; resigns from Washington's cabinet, 211; opposes friendliness with England, 212; his views on rebellion, 213; election as President, 216; drafts Kentucky Resolutions, 217; purchases Louisiana, 258.
Jenkins, Captain, 187.
Jerome, St., 82.
Joanna of Castile, 156.
John, of England, 118, 119, 120.
John George, of Saxony, 159.
Johnson, Dr., 345.
Joubert, General, 239.
Juba, of Numidia, 64.
Judas Iscariot, 69.
Jugurtha, 36.
Justinian, Emperor, 82, 251.

Kalisch, Treaty of, 280.
Keate, Dr., 345.
Keats, *quoted*, 132.
Kirke, 154.
Kruger, P., 300, 389.
Kulturkampf, The, 322.

La Fayette, Marquis de, 192.
Langton, Archb., 119, 120.
Lateran Councils, 123, 124, 130, 131, 133.

Laud, Archb., 173.
Lebrun, Third Consul, 244, 246.
Lee, General, 192.
Leo III., Pope, 80, 89, 95.
Leo IX., Pope, 109.
Leo XIII., Pope, 324.
Leo the Isaurian, Emperor, 84.
Leopold of Hohenzollern, 315, 316, 317.
Lincoln, Abraham, 187, 215, 218, 301, 321, 362.
Livy, 75, 76, 140.
Lloyd George, D., 344, 368, 377, 416.
Lorraine (and Alsace), 98, 156, 164, 167, 318-320, 332.
Lothar, Emperor, 98.
Louis the Pious, Emperor, 98.
Louis IX., of France, 143.
Louis XI., of France, 144.
Louis XIII., of France, 148, 150, 166.
Louis XIV., of France, 136, 152, 166-170, 175, 220, 221, 252, 255, 277, 321.
Louis XV., of France, 222, 252, 258.
Louis XVI., of France, 224, 225, 227, 245, 284.
Louis XVIII., of France, 240.
Louis the German, 98.
Louis-Philippe, of France, 285, 293.
Louisiana, 175, 197, 213, 214, 258.
Lowe, R., 365.
Loyola, Ignatius, 142.
Lucca, Conference at, 56.
Lucullus, M., 44.
Luther, Martin, 141, 142, 148, 149, 155, 273.

Macaulay, Lord, 53.
Machiavelli, N., 141, 276.
M'Kinley, W., 215.
Mahdi, The, 393.
Mahommed, 83.
Manteuffel, Count, 291, 296.
Marat, J. P., 229.
Marie Louise, 264.
Marie de Medicis, 146, 148.
Marius, C., 36, 37.
Markwald, Count, 116.
Marlborough, Duke of, 168.
Marshall, Chief Justice, 207.
Mary of Burgundy, 156.
Masefield, J., on Pompey, 47.
Masséna, Marshall, 238, 248.
Matthias, Emperor, 158.
Maximilian I., Emperor, 156.
Maximilian of Bavaria, 158.
Mazarin, Cardinal, 166, 167.
Mehemet Ali, Khedive, 390.
Mercer, General, 190.
Metternich, Prince, opposes German nationalism in 1813, 280; policy after treaty of Vienna, 282; fall of, 285, 294.
Mill, J. S., on Conservatives, 60; on Disraeli's Reform Bill, 366.
Milton, J., *quoted*, 178, 381.
Mirabeau, Marquis de, 224, 225.
Mithridates, 37, 44.
Moltke, Field-Marshal von, 340.
Mommsen, T., on Pompey, 47; *quoted* on Caesar's attitude to the Gallic War, 51; on Caesar's work of reconstruction, 67.
Monk, G., 248.
Monroe, J., President, 210.
Montfort, Simon de, the elder, 134.
Morley, J., afterwards Lord, 43; *quoted* on Egypt, 392; Irish Secretary, 403; *quoted* on fate of Liberal party, 404.
Moreau, General, 248, 255.
Morris, W., 404.
Murat, Prince, 263.
Murzoufle, 130.

Naboth, 283.
Nantes, Edict of, 146, 149, 152, 169.
Napoleon I., Emperor, heir of the French Revolution, 219; at *Vendémiaire*, 233; early career, 233; relations with Directory, 234; Italian campaign, 235; coup d'état of *Fructidor*, 237; Egyptian expedition, 237, 257; Cisalpine Republic, 238; joins Sieyès, 241; *Brumaire*, 242; establishes Consulate, 243; policy of Consulate, 245; establishes religious toleration,

and restores émigrés, 246; local government, 247; tyranny over opinion, 247; peace with Austria and England, 248; Concordat, 249; Code, 251; educational system, 253; assumes Imperial crown, 255; extra-European policy, in Egypt, India, America, Australia, 256-259; motives for his later wars, 260; projected invasion of England, 261; Treaty of Tilsit, 262; effects of his conquests, 264; downfall, 265; diverse judgments on, 267; *otherwise mentioned*, 8, 70, 72, 153, 165, 171, 194, 214, 229, 278, 280, 285, 289, 319, 331.
Napoleon III., Emperor, parentage, 263; enigmatic character, 267, 310; president and emperor, 293; Crimean War, 294, 359; restores Pope to Rome, 295; Bismarck's opinion of him, 297; Italian War, and annexation of Savoy and Nice, 295, 357, 361; favours Prussia in Schleswig-Holstein, 306; intervention after Königgrätz, 310; defeat and abdication, 317.
Nebuchadnezzar, 87.
Nelson, Lord, 257, 261.
Nero, Emperor, 361.
Newcastle, Duke of, 346, 362.
Nicaea, Council of, 124.
Nicholas I., of Russia, 287, 293, 294.
Nietzsche, F., 141.
North, Lord, 211.

Offa, 90.
Olmütz, Convention of, 291, 295, 296.
Otto I., the Great, Emperor, 100, 109, 270.
Otto III., Emperor, 109.
Otto IV., of Brunswick, Emperor, 116, 117, 269.

Pacifico, Don, 360.
Palm, the bookseller, 264.
Palmerston, Lord, character of his statesmanship, 360; *quoted* on Gladstone, 362; *otherwise mentioned*, 303, 306, 353, 358, 359, 361, 363, 364, 377.
Papacy, beginnings of, 82; turns from the Greeks to the Franks, 84; *see under the various* Popes.
Parnell, C. S., 333; his Irish policy, 382-385; on Home Rule, 399; interview with Carnarvon, 400; on Home Rule Bill, 403; the *Times* forgery, 405; divorce, 405; English opinion of, 408.
Paschal II., Pope, 112.
Paul, St., 360.
Paul III., Pope, 142.
Peel, Sir R., 348, 350, 352, 353, 356, 360, 361, 368.
Peelites, The, 353, 359, 361.
Penn, W., 176.
Pepin, father of Charles the Great, 84, 86, 98.
Pepin, son of Charles the Great, 89, 128.
Pericles, his place in Athenian history, 2; attacks the Areopagus, 9; source of his power, 11; limits Athenian citizenship, 13; architectural policy, 14; secures ostracism of Cimon, 14; of Thucydides, 15; organizes Athenian food supply, 15; pan-Hellenic colony at Thurii, 16; fourteen years' peace, 20; reluctance to enter on Peloponnesian war, 22; Funeral Speech 23; growing unpopularity, and death, 24; nature of his greatness, 27; *also mentioned*, 138, 267.
Peter the Great, of Russia, 87.
Phidias, 24.
Philip Augustus, of France, 118, 125, 143.
Philip IV., of France, 138, 143.
Philip II., of Spain, 157.
Philip the Handsome, 156.
Philip of Swabia, 116, 117, 127, 128, 129, 269.
Pichegru, General, 255.

Pilgrim Fathers, The, 174, 176.
Piraeus, The, 6.
Pisistratus, 8.
Pitt, W., Earl of Chatham, 181, 184, 204, 360.
Pitt, W., the younger, 207, 225.
Pius VI., Pope, 250.
Pius VII., Pope, 250, 255.
Pius IX., Pope, 286, 293, 295, 322.
Plato, 1, 5.
Pliny the younger, 81.
Plunkett, Sir H., 386.
Plutarch, 69.
Poland, 226, 302, 333.
Pompey, commands against Sertorius, and overthrows Sullan constitution, 42; unfitted for statesmanship, 43; commands against Mithridates, 44; Masefield and Mommsen on, 47; First Triumvirate, 47; at Lucca, 56; joins the Oligarchs, 60; defeat and death, 64, 131.
Pontiac, 181.
Prim, General, 315.
Prussia, contrasted with Sparta, 17; origin of the name, 274, 276; under Frederick the Great 276-278; during Napoleonic Wars, 278-282; during period of Metternich, 282-286; need of expansion after 1815, 283; *see also* Brandenburg, Germany, Bismarck, etc.
Pym, J., 185, 381.

Raleigh, Sir W., 173.
Ranke, L. von, 321.
Raymond, Count of Toulouse, 134.
Reformation, The, 142.
Renaissance, The, 139-141.
Revolution, French, in relation to United States, 207, 209; causes, 219; influenced by American War, 223; aims in 1789, 224; development of, 224-244; two meanings of the term, 231; compared with the German Revolution, 289; *also mentioned*, 153, 169.
Ricardo, D., 141.
Richard I., of England, 118, 125, 126.
Richelieu, Cardinal, importance of his career, 143; early life, 147; relations with Louis XIII., 148; the task before him, 149; deals with the Huguenot danger, 150; with feudalism, 152; his *Intendants*, 153; finance, 154; colonies, 154; literary interests, 155; ecclesiastical policy, 155; Thirty Years' War, 159-166; his statesmanship ignores religion, 160; creates navy, 165; intervenes in Scotland, 165; death, 166; architect of Louis XIV's power, 168; criticism of his statesmanship, 170, 171; *also mentioned*, 139, 175, 219, 220, 247, 269, 297, 324.
Robespierre, M., 229, 230, 232, 241, 245.
Robinson, Sir H., 390.
Rohan, Duc de, 150.
Roland, 88.
Rome, its history compared with that of Athens, 29; influence of Hellenism on, 32; extension of citizenship after the Social War, 37; problems confronting Caesar, 40; Caesar's attempted solutions of these problems, 67; under Augustus, 76; sketch of history in first eight centuries A.D., 80; Charles the Great in, 95; survival of Roman 'Empire,' 100; transition from Empire to Papacy, 105; relations with Innocent III., 114; with Napoleon, 249; with Bismarck, 322.
Roon, L. von, 273, 299, 340.
Roosevelt, T., 215.
Rousseau, J. J., 185, 209, 222, 234, 245.
Rupert, Prince, 177.
Ruskin, J., 17.
Russell, Lord J., 352, 353, 355, 363, 364, 371.

Salisbury, Lord, 366, 385, 399, 400, 408.

Sancho I., of Portugal, 120.
Saturninus, C., 37.
Schleswig-Holstein, 303 *sqq.*, 362.
Schwartzenberg, Prince, 287, 354.
Sertorius, Q., 41, 42, 53.
Seward, W., 215.
Shakespeare, W., 50, 69, 72, 227.
Shaw, G. B., on Caesar and Cleopatra, 66; on Napoleon and England, 265.
Sheridan, R. B., *quoted*, 121.
Sieyès, Abbé, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 251.
Smith, Adam, 184.
Socrates, 5, 381.
Solon, 7.
Sophocles, 5.
Soubise, Duc de, 150.
Spain, Caesar in, 53; Charles the Great in, 88; Innocent III. and, 120; rival of France in time of Richelieu, 149, 156 *sqq.*; her American colonies, 174; quarrel with U.S.A., 197; loses Louisiana, 258; Peninsular War, 262; geographical character, 271; Hohenzollern candidature, 315.
Sparta, character of Spartan state, 17.
Spartacus, 42.
Spencer, Lord, 384, 402.
Stein, Freiherr von, 279, 280.
Stephen, Pope, 85.
Stevenson, R. L., *quoted*, 46.
Steuben, Baron von, 192.
Stilicho, 81.
Strafford, Lord, 148, 302.
Strassburg, Oath of, 99.
Stratford de Redcliffe, 358.
Sulla, L. Cornelius, 38, 41.
Sully, Duc de, 146.

Tacitus, 57, 81; *quoted*, 135.
Tait, Archb., 368.
Talleyrand, C. M. de, 239, 240, 241, 266.
Teplitz, Treaty of, 281.
Tewfik, Khedive, 390.
Tiberius, Emperor, 77.
Themistocles, 4.
Theodoric, 82.
Thirty Years' War, The, 157 *sqq.*, 269, 274.
Thucydides, 5; *quoted*, 20, 21, 23.
Thucydides, son of Melesias, 15.
Tolstoi, 209.
Toussaint L'Ouverture, 258.
Trade Unions, Gladstone's indifference to, 373.
Trajan, 80, 104.
Tucker, Dean, 184.
Tunis, 330.
Turenne, Comte de, 166, 167.
Turkish crisis of 1876-1878, 328, 374.

Ulpian, 81.
United States, lack of unity during war with England, 195; breaches of treaty of Versailles, 196; steps leading to Union, 197-202; character of U.S. constitution, 202; ambiguity therein, 216; *see also under* American colonies of England, Washington, Hamilton.
Urban II., Pope, 111.
Urban VIII., Pope, *quoted on* Richelieu, 156.

Vandal, A., on French local government, 247.
Varus, L., 270.
Vauban, Marshal, 170.
Venice, transferred from Western to Eastern Empire, 90; Fourth Crusade, 128-131; ally of Richelieu, 160; partitioned by Napoleon, 236; passes to Austria, 281; rebels against Austria, 286; transferred to Italy, 310.
Vercingetorix, 56, 58, 270.
Verdun, Treaty of, 98.
Verres, C., 43.
Victor Emanuel, 148.
Victoria, Queen, 72, 306, 328, 368, 372, 374, 407.
Virgil, 75, 94; *quoted*, 136.
Voltaire, 222.

Waldenses, 132, 133.
Wallenstein, A. von, 161, 162, 163.

Walpole, Sir R., 22.
Walter, Hubert, Archb., 119.
Washington, G., arrival of his ancestors in Virginia, 177; his two tasks, 177; his part in the Seven Years' War, 187; difficulties as commander of the American army, 188; phases of the war, 190-193; his respect for law, 193; refuses to establish authority by force, 194; *quoted on* lack of government, 195; sets on foot the movement that leads to Union, 197; partnership with Hamilton, 198; elected President, 204; his cabinet, 204; supports Hamilton against Jefferson, 209; issues Declaration of Neutrality, 210; ratifies Jay's treaty with England, 213; suppresses the Whisky rebellion, 213; retirement, 214; death, 215; his work tested by the Civil War; *also mentioned*, 244, 248, 267.
Weems' *Life of Washington*, 187.
Wellington, Duke of, 263, 366.
Wells, H. G., *quoted on* Napoleon, 268.
Westphalia, Treaties of, 166.
William I., German Emperor, becomes Regent, 298; and King of Prussia, 299; army reform, 299; Schleswig-Holstein question, 307; opposes Bismarck after Königgrätz, 309; Emperor, 321; refuses to dismiss Bismarck, 322; Bismarck quoted on his character, 333; *also mentioned*, 101, 148.
William II., German Emperor, 334, 336.
William III., of England, 168, 206.
William IV., of England, 348.
Wilson, W., President, 215, 410.
Windischgrätz, Count, 287.
Wolfe, General, 154; *quoted on* colonial troops, 180.
Wolseley, Sir G., 390, 395.
Wordsworth, W., 350.

Xerxes, 3.

York, General, 279.

Zara, 129.

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